

Riverdale Community Unit School District #100



**2024-2025 School Year
State of the District Report**

Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive review and analysis of the Riverdale School District's performance and key events during the 2024-2025 school year. It encompasses critical aspects of our operations, including curriculum advancements, facility enhancements, staffing, transportation, and financial stewardship. This report will be presented at the June 23rd, 2025, school board meeting, reinforcing Riverdale's commitment to delivering quality education, fostering student achievement, and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

2024-2025 Highlights

The 2024-2025 school year marked significant progress and notable events for Riverdale School District:

- **Facilities Modernization:** The school year commenced with the successful completion of the most extensive capital project Riverdale has undertaken in decades. This initiative saw a complete renovation of the elementary school library and 19 other learning spaces, including all Kindergarten and 3rd-5th grade classrooms. This project was completed both on time and under budget, demonstrating the Board of Education's commitment to investing in the future of Riverdale Schools and providing an optimal learning environment for our youngest students. Such investments also play a crucial role in retaining current staff and attracting new talent and families to our community.
- **Minimal Weather Impact:** The district experienced only a single day impacted by inclement weather during the 2024-2025 school year. An eLearning day was implemented on January 21st due to extreme temperatures, with wind chills reaching -35 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Intersection Safety Concerns:** On September 19th, 2024, a serious accident occurred near the elementary school at the intersection of 94th Avenue and 256th Street, necessitating a life flight evacuation. Our local first responders, school nurse, and Student Resource Officer responded promptly. This incident highlighted ongoing safety concerns at this intersection, which has been the site of several accidents over the years, particularly affecting families unfamiliar with the area. Despite repeated outreach to local government officials regarding mitigation strategies, a comprehensive solution remains challenging due to the building's geographic location relative to the intersection, the varying governmental jurisdictions of the opposing roads, and the involvement of private landowners. The district remains committed to exploring and implementing strategies to improve traffic flow and reduce the potential for future accidents.

District Level Achievements

- **Exceptional Financial Health:** Riverdale School District achieved a perfect score of 4.0 recognition for its financial profile, the highest rating awarded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
- **Policy Updates:** The district continued to update existing school board policies in alignment with recommendations from PRESS Plus, ensuring ongoing compliance and best practices.
- **Streamlined Fundraising:** A concerted effort was made to limit on-campus fundraising activities, with the goal of reducing the burden of sales on students and the community. A formal request form was developed, requiring superintendent approval prior to execution. This resulted in a reduction in overall fundraiser requests. Thanks to adjustments in high school registration fees (which now cover costs like prom) and support from the unified booster club, this reduction did not negatively impact student experiences.
- **Evolving Sports Handbook Policy:** The district maintained its commitment to the continuous improvement of policies outlined in the sports handbook. Updates are regularly implemented to ensure fairness and equity, often informed by reflections on specific incidents and the evolving needs of the district.
- **Professional Development:** Four Board members and the superintendent attended the annual School Board Conference in Chicago, one of the largest conventions of its kind. This experience provided valuable training, networking, and professional development opportunities for attendees.
- **ISBE Summative Designations:** The Illinois State Board of Education awarded the following summative designations:
 - Riverdale High School: Exemplary
 - Riverdale Elementary School: Exemplary
 - Riverdale Middle School: Commendable
- **Enhanced Cybersecurity:** To bolster cyber security, which is an increasing concern for public schools, the district implemented Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). All staff members using the school network and assigned a school account are now required to use MFA, providing an effective additional layer of security against most tier-one threats to our network and data.
- **Efficient Staff Training:** The district leveraged the Ed Leaders Network (ELN), an online platform endorsed by IASA and ISBE, to efficiently complete and track mandated staff training. ELN organizes and links training modules to district email accounts, tracking completion, providing reminders, and offering documentation of compliance.
- **Embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Recognizing the growing influence of AI, Riverdale District embraced new technology by piloting Brisk Teaching during the

2024-2025 school year. Brisk Teaching is an AI-powered Chrome extension designed to automate educator workloads, offering tools for resource creation, feedback, and lesson planning. It integrates seamlessly with platforms like Google Docs, Slides, and YouTube. Following a successful pilot, Brisk Teaching will be available district-wide in the 2025-2026 school year.

Curriculum Enhancements

The 2024-2025 school year saw significant additions and changes to our curriculum and supplemental resources:

- **ENVISION:** Implementation of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) assessment, programming, tracking, and intervention system.
- **Expanded Dual Credit Offerings:** Increased dual credit opportunities at the high school level.
- **Business and Computer Science:** Introduction of new courses and programs in Business and Computer Science.
- **Expansion of IXL:** Broadened use of the IXL learning platform across subjects. IXL is a personalized online learning program offering a comprehensive K-12 curriculum in math, language arts, science, social studies, and Spanish. It provides interactive practice, assessments, and instructional resources to support student learning and skill development.
- **UFLI Phonics Implementation:** Introduced UFLI phonics at the elementary school to strengthen foundational reading skills.

Facilities Projects Completed

The following significant projects were completed during the 2024-2025 school year, further enhancing our school facilities:

- Resurfaced the high school track.
- Renovated the playing surface of the game field.
- Installed irrigation on the game field.
- Created a new surface for soccer practice.
- Installed HVAC in the High School gym.
- Constructed a new concession stand at the ball diamonds.
- Renovated the High School wrestling room.
- Upgraded the audio system at the ball diamonds.
- Installed new bleachers in the high school gym.

Staffing Overview

The district experienced changes in its staffing landscape:

- **Resignations:** One self-contained special education teacher resigned in early October, necessitating a re-evaluation of placement and staffing for the elementary special education program.
- **Retirements (Certified Staff):**
 - Jim Campbell - High School Chemistry, Physics, and Calculus II
 - Tami Claus - Kindergarten teacher
 - Margie Speckman - Kindergarten teacher
 - Jen Robinson - High School Guidance Counselor
- **Retirements (Support Staff):**
 - Laurie Vroman - Administrative Office Assistant/Board Secretary
 - Lori Ortiz - Transportation Director
- **New Hires (Certified Staff):**
 - Kevin Claus - High School English Teacher
 - Jessica DeCap - Preschool Teacher
 - Abigail Thompson - High School Special Education Teacher
 - Stacie Noble - Middle School Special Education Teacher
 - Ceara Stanton - Middle School Interventionist
 - Drew Kerr - Middle School Math Teacher
 - Robert Manasco - High School Robotics/Computer Science
- **New Hires (Support Staff):**
 - Stephanie VanDeCateele - Admin Office Assistant/Board Secretary

Student Achievements & Data

- **Graduation Rate:** 95.5% of the seniors who began the 2024-2025 school year graduated from Riverdale (65 out of 68). One student transitioned to homeschooling, one transferred to another high school, and one dropped out. Only one of these factors will impact the state-level calculation, resulting in a 98.5% graduation rate.
- **Freshman On Track Rate:** 96.67% of freshmen were on track to graduate (-1.97% from the previous year).
- **Post-Graduation Plans:** 75% of students plan to enroll in college post-graduation (-1% from last year).
- **Extracurricular Participation:**
 - 76.6% of high school students participated in at least one extracurricular activity (+2%).

- 54.82% of high school students participated in two or more extracurricular activities (-2.61%).
- **High School ACT Scores:**
 - The high school's average ACT score was 21.3, exceeding the national average of 19.8.
 - 10.4% of juniors scored 30 or higher.
 - One student achieved a perfect score of 36!
- **Illinois Assessment for Readiness (IAR) Scores:**
 - *Note on State Thresholds:* The thresholds for determining "exceeding" or "meeting expectations" on the IAR are currently under review by the state of Illinois. Historically, Illinois' cut scores have been significantly higher than many other states, potentially making our students and schools appear to perform lower than comparable populations when direct comparisons were not valid. Recalculated scores were not available at the time of this report. The data below compares Riverdale Middle School and Riverdale Elementary scores to the state averages.
 - **Riverdale Middle School:**
 - 6th-8th grade outperformed the state average in ELA by 12 points.
 - 6th-8th grade outperformed the state average in Math by 11 points.
 - 6th-8th grade underperformed the state average in Science by 3 points.
 - Students qualifying for intervention services were reduced by 53%.
 - 67% of 7th and 8th grade students participated in extracurricular activities.
 - **Riverdale Elementary School:**
 - 3rd-5th grade outperformed the state average in ELA by 15 points.
 - 3rd-5th grade outperformed the state average in Math by 14 points.
 - Students meeting Math benchmarks increased by 12%.
 - Students meeting Reading benchmarks decreased by 2%.
 - Students qualifying for Math intervention services decreased by 13%.
 - Students qualifying for Reading intervention services decreased by 9%.
- **IEP Services:** 15% of students in the district receive IEP services (+1%).
- **Free and Reduced Lunch Qualification:**
 - Totals: 23% of all students qualified for free or reduced lunches.
 - Elementary School: 142 students (-14 from prior year)
 - Middle School: 60 students (+4 from prior year)
 - High School: 53 students (-5 from prior year)
- **Academic & Athletic Accolades:**

- Seven high school students were named Illinois State Scholars, representing approximately 10% of the entire senior class.
- Boys Golf Team: Placed 3rd in Class 1A State.
 - Aiden Dorothy - Individual State Champion
 - Mason Smyser - 9th Place Individual
- Girls Basketball: Won Regionals.
- Scholastic Bowl:
 - Masonic Sectional Champs
 - IHSA Regional Champs
- High School Wrestling: Two wrestlers placed 1st at State:
 - Blake Smith
 - Dean Wainwright
- Speech Team: Regional Champs, with 10 students placing.
 - Jorie Slone and Caroline Kreiter placed 3rd - Dramatic Duet Acting.
 - Trey Stodard - 2nd Place - Radio.
- All-State Choir Recognition: Noah Dolan received All-State Choir Recognition.
- Girls Softball: Won Regionals.
- Middle School IESA Wrestling: 5 wrestlers placed, with the Class 1A Team placing 4th.
 - Henry Schradeya - 1st Place
 - Luke McClaine - 2nd Place
- Middle School IESA Track: 13 middle school students medaled at the IESA track state finals.
 - 7th grader Piper Peterson placed 3rd in High Jump.

Transportation Initiatives

- **BusRight Software Implementation:** In an effort to improve efficiency and communication within our transportation services, the district purchased and deployed the new BusRight software program. Each bus is now equipped with a digital touch screen providing turn-by-turn navigation for drivers. The program assists with:
 - Creation of optimized routes.
 - Efficient information sharing with families.
 - Organizing comprehensive transportation data.
 - Turn-by-turn navigation for both regular routes and special trips.
 - Sharing real-time data with parents regarding bus arrival and departure times.
 - Aiding in the retention and recruitment of drivers.

- Facilitating communication with families regarding individual routes.

Financial Report

- **Consistent Balances:** District balances remained consistent, supporting continued growth and improvement initiatives across the district.
- **CPPRT Funds:** Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) funds came in approximately 33% less than the previous year, as predicted. This period of correction over the last three years saw receipts decrease from approximately one million dollars three years ago to just over four hundred thousand dollars this year. It is estimated that future amounts will align with FY25 receipts, which were around \$425,000.
- **Audits:** Regular and Federal Audits were completed with no required adjustments, resulting in a 4.0 rating, the highest achievable.
- **Local Tax Assessments:** Increased local tax assessments and Equalized Assessed Valuations (EAVs) led to an 8.6% increase in the 2024-2025 levy.
- **County School Facility Tax:** The County School Facility Tax remained consistent, providing vital support for needed maintenance and construction projects across the district. Monthly receipts averaged approximately \$70,000.
- **Federal ESSER Funds:** Total Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds received since 2020 amounted to \$2,435,409.00. Final allocations were made and accounted for by the required deadline of September 2024.

Final Analysis

Academic Analysis

Riverdale students consistently outperform their peers in almost every category, yet there remains ample room for growth. Separating academic success from available programming highlights the unique limitations and struggles of a small, rural school. Significant progress has been made in dual credit and AP offerings at the high school, with more than 75% of high school students completing a dual credit or AP class in the 2024-2025 school year, a substantial increase from approximately 25% in the 2021-2022 school year. The number of courses offered has grown significantly over the last five years, with students now able to choose from 12 different classes, up from just 3. The success of these instructional offerings is further supported by the relatively high number of students, compared to total high school enrollment, who earn recognition as Illinois State Scholars.

The number of students enrolling in skilled or technical training courses post-graduation has shown double-digit increases in each of the last two years and is projected to increase by almost 12% again this year. Students and families are increasingly considering skilled trades and technical training as viable career options. Supporting this trend requires the district to develop robust programming in these areas, beginning even before students enter high school. Riverdale Middle School has developed a program that builds upon these interests, offering students more opportunities for career exploration and field trips to expose them to various fields of interest. Supporting these opportunities and career pathways provides students with a broader range of options for making connections, fostering more successful transitions as they make college and career choices.

One of the many challenges in preparing students for the future is that many of the necessary skills and available jobs have not even been invented yet. It is difficult to hit a target you cannot see. The one inevitable fact is that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will become an ever-increasing part of their lives. While AI may not replace humans altogether, humans proficient in AI will likely replace those who are not. As a district, we have a responsibility to develop educators' skills to help prepare students for the world they will inhabit. Helping our students learn how to use AI, interact with AI, and differentiate between real and artificially generated information will become increasingly important. How we assess, instruct, and interact with students will need to adjust to the development of this new technology.

Riverdale continues to provide a variety of opportunities and experiences for students that are unmatched by most districts of our size. While smaller enrollment has historically limited the variety of academic offerings, technology and digital access are now bridging that divide. Continuing to build relationships with other districts, programs, and organizations to leverage instructional offerings could be transformative. Allowing students to participate in programming via digital access is an avenue that should continue to be explored. Maintaining vocational and career programming opportunities through partnerships with programs like ACC at UTHS and collaborations with local districts remains an excellent way to provide diverse options for students.

Over the last decade, Riverdale has developed programming for students needing support in special education, life skills, and vocational areas. Supporting this type of programming in a small district can be challenging, as the needs of individual students can significantly impact staffing with the addition of even a single student. However, the benefits of offering such programming far outweigh the consequences of providing services off-campus.

The potential exists for greater variety in programming for students identified as gifted and talented. In the past, supporting the needs of these students has been a challenge, with acceleration or partial acceleration being the most typical responses. As previously mentioned, digital options and partnerships with other institutions could be beneficial moving forward. Our geographical location and limited district resources are becoming less of a barrier thanks to digital platforms and remote learning opportunities. Leveraging AI platforms to help create programs for elementary-aged students who need challenges in specific areas has become simpler, allowing teachers to more quickly, efficiently, and equitably address their specific needs.

Often, the most challenging barriers to the linear development and trajectory of instructional content and materials are self-imposed. The transitions between buildings (elementary to middle school and middle school to high school) and the linear progression of skills are limited only by our ability to collaborate effectively. Being intentional about the progression of skills and ensuring they build upon each other requires a commitment to providing opportunities for staff members to communicate and work together. This begins at the building level and extends to the grades above and below the transitional years. The initiation of a strategic planning process will facilitate these opportunities. Developing common goals and language across the district will help to unify academic development and integrity for the future, further supporting what is already a strong academic foundation for student instruction.

Elementary

An assistant principal has been hired and will commence duties in the 2025-2026 school year. After several years of careful deliberation and consideration, it was determined that this addition would significantly support both students and staff. It has been almost 30 years since an Assistant Principal was hired at the elementary school. Given the increasing need for behavioral support, teacher retention, and instructional coaching, this addition has been very well received.

An additional special education teacher has been added to help support students who require more self-contained instruction in the primary grades.

Reading resources in the form of decodable books are being added for the 2025-2026 school year, specifically targeting grades K-2.

Writing curriculum development will be underway in the summer of 2025. Representatives from each grade level will meet to create a curriculum that provides consistency and continuity across all grades.

Middle School

The addition of a full-time interventionist at the middle school has positively impacted the growth and achievement of students who previously struggled to meet benchmark levels.

The addition of a highly skilled paraprofessional (a former certified teacher) will help address some of the instructional support needed for students requiring IEP services.

A fully integrated Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program will assess, monitor, and program for the needs of students across all grade levels. The data is being tracked and utilized to target the most vulnerable students, with all staff members involved in the program.

A therapy dog named Keeta was added to the staff at the middle school in the 2024-2025 school year. Keeta belongs to Mrs. Sandra Rolling, who approached the district about bringing him on as a therapy dog. Keeta has been a positive addition to the building.

High School

Since 2022, the high school has increased the number of dual credit/AP courses from 3 to 12. The number of students who have participated in these classes is projected to have increased from 66 in 2022 to 234 in the 2024-2025 school year, representing a significant increase over five school years!

In 2024-2025, the high school will be adding dual credit courses in:

- Business
- Pre-calculus
- Calculus

Three students completed SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) programming for the first time in many years.

A therapy dog named Tralee was added to the staff at the high school. Tralee is a school-owned therapy dog, with Miss Bugos serving as her handler.

Student Analysis

Consistency and commitment to attendance are becoming an ever-increasing point of emphasis. The overall attendance increased by 0.2% in the 2024-2025 school year, from 94.2% to 94.4%. While this might seem insignificant, it reflects half a day's worth of

attendance across the district. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the 2018-2019 school year, the attendance rate was 96.6%. Since the pandemic, families appear to have adopted a more relaxed approach to school attendance, which can significantly impact student performance. For example, a student who misses one day of school each month from kindergarten through grade 12 will have effectively missed almost an entire year of instruction. Recognizing that certain factors are beyond control, being intentional about regular school attendance can genuinely impact student success, particularly in grades K-6. As a district, we will adopt a more consistent approach across all buildings to remind parents of the importance of attendance. Our messaging and reminders will be sent at specific intervals to ensure parents are aware of instances of absenteeism, regardless of the reason. This approach contributed to an increase in attendance during the second half of the 2024-2025 school year.

A number of students continue to struggle with mental health issues, which often manifest as behavioral issues at school. Social media and peer interactions tend to exacerbate these situations. The district has implemented a cell phone policy to help mitigate issues at school; however, events beyond our control often play out on campus. The implementation of an SEL screener at the middle school has helped identify students needing support before crises occur, allowing for preventive programming and support in hopes of preventing negative experiences at school. Despite these efforts, we are still tasked with managing and supporting students when situations arise. In extreme cases, students needing additional support are referred to outside programs. Unfortunately, options for placement and services are limited, leaving the school with the difficult task of providing access to a free, safe, and public education while balancing the health and safety of everyone involved.

Riverdale high school students continue to participate in extracurricular events at high levels, with 76.6% of students involved in at least one activity. This number is slightly lower at the middle school, with 67% of eligible students participating. This high engagement reflects a student body that is actively involved and focused beyond just academics. As a district, we continue to develop and explore opportunities for all students to be engaged, including vocational/life skills classes, technical and trade skills programming, and increasing dual credit and AP coursework at the high school.

The result of a supportive community and school that provides a variety of experiences and options for students is a consistently high-achieving and successful student body. Despite this, continued development of programming, services, and placement options for students needing behavioral and mental health support should remain a focus to meet the diverse needs of our students.

Staffing Analysis

- There are 81 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Certified staff members (+4 from prior year).
- Riverdale's student-to-teacher ratio is 13.5:1, compared to the state ratio of 17:1.
- Riverdale's average teacher salary is \$54,829 (an increase of \$1,493 from prior year).
- 36% of Riverdale teachers hold a master's degree (+2% from prior year).
- Riverdale's teacher retention rate is 93% (+1% from prior year). Current staffing levels are sufficient to maintain existing programming. Close attention should be paid to enrollment trends and behavioral issues experienced in classrooms across the district. If enrollment consistently trends downward over the next few years, measured responses in staffing should be considered as part of fiscally responsible management. Every effort should be made to maintain the academic integrity of the district while also making fiscally responsible decisions for the taxing body.

Retention and recruitment of staff remain a concern for the future. Qualified available candidates are in high demand, especially for hard-to-fill positions in grades 6-12. The pending retirement of highly qualified veteran teachers within the next three years is a particular concern. Investments in staff, supporting them with professional development, and developing a teacher mentor program should be a priority. Identifying and supporting students interested in becoming educators and developing a "grow your own" program could help address this issue. Considerations for new incentives should be evaluated in an effort to recruit new staff members and retain veterans. Investing resources in staff will benefit students, as well as the safety and security of the buildings.

Transportation Analysis

The addition of BusRight, the new transportation software system, has been a positive development, improving communication, organization, and efficiency. All but one of the sixteen buses in the fleet are now gas-powered. Additional drivers have been hired, and a transportation administrative assistant will join for the 2025-2026 school year. The process of transferring updated registration information to the new software has improved, allowing more time for route development in the summer. The vehicle fleet has been reduced, with little-used, aging, and obsolete vehicles being sold off. New minivan vehicles, which will serve as a more flexible transportation option, will be purchased in the summer of 2025. These vehicles are rated for student transport and can also be used by staff as needed. As a district, we are able to meet our transportation needs with the exception of a few days a year in the spring when multiple sports and/or field trips are taking place simultaneously.

Facilities Analysis

A number of projects were in various states of completion during the 2024-2025 school year, with two being high priorities identified in 2021.

High School Gym HVAC: For years, the question of when the high school gym would be air-conditioned has been asked. This finally came to fruition in May 2025. Prior to Senior Awards Night and graduation, the installation of air conditioners in the high school gym was completed. The project was funded through a combination of health/life/safety dollars and capital funds resources. Construction began over spring break in mid-March and was completed in early May. The construction displaced high school P.E. classes for several weeks, but the P.E. staff graciously made the best of the situation.

Baseball/Softball Concession Stand: Construction of the baseball/softball concession stand was completed prior to the first varsity home game in April. This project was accomplished with help from the Riverdale Boosters, local volunteers, and donations. We are fortunate to now have working bathrooms, storage, an audio system, and a proper concessions area.

Game Field & Track Renovations: The football/soccer game field was completely redone. Volunteers provided services for tillage, grading, and seeding. An in-ground irrigation system was installed, and new goal posts were purchased. The track surface around the game field was resurfaced and repainted prior to track season. As a result of the new concession stand construction, a new location was created for soccer practice. In the area between the high school and elementary school, a practice field was leveled and prepared to serve as the new location for soccer practice in the fall. This will now allow for a fully dimensional surface in a more convenient location.

Future Infrastructure Needs:

- **Asphalt/concrete:** Parking lots and sidewalks across the district will require a plan of action in the coming years.
- **Parking:** The addition of a parking lot near the new concession stand should also be considered.
- **Outdoor Bleachers:** Outdoor bleachers near the ball diamonds and playing field will need to be addressed in the future. Portable bleachers could serve as primary bleachers at the ball diamonds and supplementary bleachers at the playing field. New permanent outdoor bleachers at the high school would be a significant investment. As long as the current system is safe and meets our needs, the replacement of the bleachers or a renovation of the outdoor space

would be the focus after the completion of the supplemental gym/classroom/office remodel at the high school.

Middle School Improvements: The middle school is the newest of the academic buildings on campus. Cosmetic improvements such as painting walls, replacing flooring, and ceiling grids will significantly impact its aesthetics. In the coming year, projects including the replacement of the ceiling grid and lights throughout the building will be completed. Plans for replacing the lights and seats in the auditorium will also be under discussion in the coming year. There is some landscaping work to be done around the building as well. Future plans should also include the renovation of bathrooms.

High School Improvements: The high school continues to be structurally sound. The ceiling grid and lights in each classroom are being replaced in the summer of 2025. Plans continue to progress with hopes of adding future projects.

Prep Kitchen Renovation: Initial plans for the redesign and cost estimates for the prep kitchen renovation are in process. The timeline for this project anticipates bids going out in October 2025, with construction targeted for completion in August 2026. This was another priority project identified in 2021.

Supplemental Gym/Weight Room/Classroom Addition: The final piece of the initial capital project plan includes the addition of a supplemental gym, weight room, and classrooms. In addition to these items, it would be prudent to explore the renovation of the high school office area as well. Incorporating these spaces into the same project would have a significant impact on the physical environment of the high school. Initial plans for this project will begin in the summer of 2026, with bids to go out in the fall of 2026. The goal is for this project to be completed at the beginning of the 2028-2029 school year.

Elementary School Remaining Needs: The elementary school has significantly benefited from the completion of a major addition and renovation project addressing more than 20 learning spaces. The only spaces still needing attention are the classrooms in the upper part of the old Coe Wing and its basement. With some minor work, the basement spaces could provide much-needed square footage for storage, programming, meetings, and instruction. The exterior of the building, including asphalt and concrete, will need to be addressed in the coming years. The replacement of exterior lighting with new LED lighting is being addressed in the summer of 2025. The addition of a dedicated gym or cafeteria would serve the building well but is not a priority at this time.

Finance Analysis

The establishment of the Evidence-Based Funding model for schools in Illinois, implemented in 2017, has had a tremendous positive impact on our school district. We have experienced consistent and reliable funding for the first time in many years. This allows for confidence in budgeting, future planning, and investing in our students. Despite varying levels of uncertainty beyond our control, we have managed to maintain fiscal balances at above-average levels while also addressing long-overdue capital repair and renovation needs. The district has also benefited from the expiration of three small local TIFs (Tax Increment Financing districts) in the last two years. There is one remaining TIF set to expire in two years. The return of adjusted Equalized Assessed Valuations (EAVs) as a result of these 23-year-long TIF agreements will help support future investment in the district's resources and assets. Increases in the assessed values of properties in the school district have also contributed to the stability and overall positive fiscal health of the district.

The current level of fiscal stability provides some short-term safeguard against uncertainty surrounding the extension of federal grants in the coming years. The potential for a local property tax freeze, economic uncertainty, decreased CPPRT, and the potential for pension cost shifts still loom large. These factors, combined with increased pressure to remain competitive in the job market to attract candidates for future vacancies, will require the district to maintain its conservative budgeting practices into the future. Negotiations with the respective local bargaining units will begin in the summer of 2025. The results of these contract negotiations will inevitably require additional financial resources in the future.

Regardless of the situation, continued investment to meet the needs of the students serves a significant academic and financial interest. Providing as much programming as possible within the district to meet the needs of our students should continue to be the primary goal. Students thrive in their own communities, with their own peers. While there are limiting factors, the benefits far outweigh the alternatives. Rather than paying tuition for programming outside of the district, resources can be spent within the district on staff and programming, keeping tax dollars local. This includes academic programming, physical health, and mental health care as well.

All of these factors considered, the district is well-situated to accomplish the facility goals identified over the next five years while also meeting the financial investments needed to retain/recruit staff members and sustain current programming levels. Planning for the renewal of working cash bonds in Fiscal Year 2027 provides flexibility and sustains a responsible tax rate to accomplish future planning.

Closing Remarks

Riverdale continues to benefit from consistent funding and student success across a variety of measures. Capital projects untouched for years are being renovated, replaced, and remodeled. These impacts have a positive effect on the environment for students and teachers. Community support remains high, and families are engaged. A renewed plan for future capital projects will begin in the coming year, having accomplished all but two of the large projects identified in the previous plan. That, coupled with a district-wide strategic plan, will provide focus and vision for the years to come. Communicating, sharing information, and building relationships with all members of the school community will help to ensure that the future of the district remains bright. Riverdale continues to be a great place to live, learn, and grow. The current state of the district is strong and poised for continued growth.

Attachments:

- **10 year historical Enrollment**
- **Historical Balances**
- **Financial Profile Score**

In the past 10 years, we have experienced a total decline of 68 students. Grades K-5 average 70.6 students, which is less than the desired average of 75 students across grade levels. Current enrollment projections do not indicate a need to consider reductions in certified staffing or resources in the short term. Despite the reduced numbers, the support required to meet student needs continues to be more demanding. Given the shortage of available candidates and the pending retirement of veteran staff members, decisions on staffing, recruitment, and retention need to be made with caution.

10 year Historical enrollment

	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
Total	1155	1163	1173	1163	1164	1158	1113	1094	1097	1075	1087

2024-2025 6th day Enrollment

P/K	Kg	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
86	67	69	76	84	57	76	77	72	102	88	89	77	67

Historical Balances per Fiscal Year-End:

Financial Year	Balances	Notes
2025	*	*End of year deposits and expenses

		will not be final until after July 1
2024	\$12,555,356	\$2.8m bond
2023	\$11,606,015	
2022	\$11,640,598	
2021	\$10,707,991	
2020	\$10,585,608	\$3.6m bond
2019	\$7,001,560	
2018	\$7,428,643	
2017	\$6,496,550	
2016	\$6,692,943	\$2.7m bond
2015	\$3,619,891	
2014	\$4,337,678	
2013	\$4,597,426	
2012	\$4,259,848	\$2.0m bond
2011	\$2,265,826	
2010	\$2,235,607	

Financial Profile Score