



RIVERMONT COLLEGIATE

# Strategic Plan

2019-2024



Welcome to the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Thank you for taking the time to understand both this document and how it will guide Rivermont Collegiate in the coming years. These are exciting times for our beloved 135-year-old school!

The very purpose of education has dramatically changed in the last 25 years. Students used to travel great distances to schools, where the teachers and texts served as keepers and purveyors of knowledge. Students studied content in repetition, memorizing those fundamental facts that would be required to engage in and contribute to society. Today's student has never

lived in a world without the internet, smartphones, and social media. They can instantly search for and retrieve any fact from their fingertips. There is no need to travel great distances for education when we can video conference with nearly anyone, anywhere on earth, with the push of a button. Acknowledging that educational needs today are vastly different from 25 years ago, this shift carries profound implications for us as parents and educators.

Business and thought leaders have repeatedly called on the need for educational systems to produce students who are ready to work in STEAM-related challenges. While many of the jobs that will exist in 20-30 years do not exist today, business and thought leaders have consistently reported that they will almost certainly be in the fields related to STEAM. Additionally, while we may work increasingly online, we will need to be comfortable working with diverse thinkers and unfamiliar cultures. Society will call upon tomorrow's leaders to resolve conflicts, think creatively, and create solutions where none thought possible. For these (and many more) reasons, Rivermont feels its long-held pillars of intellect, creativity, and character, are as relevant today as ever.

Fundamental questions of our past and future served as the starting point for this strategic work:

- Are we making the right promises? Are we keeping those promises?
- How do we define excellence at Rivermont?
- Are we making progress toward reaching our definition of excellence?
- How are we responding to market and economic changes?
- How do we balance programmatic and achievement consistency with the demand for individualization?
- And most importantly, what can we do to create the best experiences for our students?

While ranked in the top 5% of NICHE schools, there remains much more to do to enhance the experience — and educational outcomes — that we provide students and families at Rivermont Collegiate. To achieve sustainability and thrive long-term, we must accurately assess what we are doing well, what needs to be improved, how we can improve it, and finally, measures that will confirm we are making progress towards those long-term goals.

This document represents a yearlong effort to answer those questions and many more. I want to thank the Strategic Planning Committee, students, parents, faculty and staff, Board of Trustees, and other friends of the school that participated in this effort. Their efforts developed what I believe is an excellent path forward for Rivermont Collegiate.

Thank you sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "C. Max Roach". The signature is stylized and fluid.

C. Max Roach  
Headmaster

## The Tradition and the Future

Our school, which was founded in 1884, was originally organized as St. Katharine's School, an Episcopal boarding and day school for girls. Located at 10th and Tremont Streets in Davenport, the School thrived for over eighty years serving the needs of local girls, as well as those from afar.

In 1968, St. Katharine's dropped its boarding program, became co-educational, and added St. Mark's to its name. With the addition of boys, the mission of the School changed, as did the flavor of the school atmosphere and culture.

In 1973, St. Katharine's-St. Mark's (SKSM) moved to Rivermont's present location, formerly the home of Joseph Bettendorf. In 1980, the School amicably broke ties with the Episcopal Church. In 2001, the Board of Trustees voted to change the name of the School to Rivermont Collegiate. As the only Preschool through 12th Grade college preparatory school in the Quad Cities, Rivermont has served the community and its families as an alternative to public and parochial school education for over 130 years.

### Our Mission:

Rivermont Collegiate's mission is to empower academically driven students by cultivating their intellect, character, and creativity.

### Three Pillars:

- **Intellect:** given challenge, guidance, and time becomes wisdom
- **Character:** demonstrated through a strong sense of personal and social responsibility
- **Creativity:** cultivates innovative thinkers who respond inventively to unknown challenges, unhindered by conventional frameworks

Creativity, combined with Intellect and Character, calls Rivermont Lions to serve others and the world at large.

### Our Philosophy:

Living a successful and productive life is not determined by how much we know or what we say — but by what we do — and the impact of those actions that remain long after we've departed. Rivermont Collegiate's faculty develop the potential of each student by thoughtfully balancing challenges with encouragement, stimulation with reflection, and structure with freedom. College preparation is not the ceiling to which we reach, but the foundation upon which our students build. We prepare students for success in tomorrow's world, wherein global economies will be increasingly interdependent, competitive, and will require cross-cultural comfort, as well as the ability to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and tackle shared challenges. Therefore, our vision is to produce smart, thoughtful, hardworking, and tenacious global citizens, who comport themselves with humility and character, and who use their gifts to effect positive changes wherever they go.

Our vision is to combine the above, with our rigorous PS-12th-grade curriculum, a culture of achievement, and the unique inclusion of international boarding students in grades 8-12, delivering a fundamentally unique and world-class educational experience.

## The Plan

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide direction for the Rivermont Collegiate community by both setting goals and providing strategies to achieve them over the next five years. The following plan integrates the mission, vision, and beliefs of Rivermont Collegiate into four strategically focused areas. The plan brings forward Rivermont Collegiate's strong tradition of academic excellence to serve and lead college preparation in the region and beyond. The plan is intentionally nimble in its design, allowing it to remain focused on its values and resources.

## The Process

The process that generated this plan began in the Spring of 2018 when the Board of Trustees voted to refresh our medium and long term goals. This plan will serve as a touchstone for several key measures that promote health, sustainability, and excellence. As you will read — and see in the coming years — we have expressed our goals and actions as investments. We hope you'll join us in investing your time, talent, and treasure into these initiatives, as they will be the framework for Rivermont's next great chapters.

Please join me in expressing tremendous gratitude to Tracy Matlock, St. Ambrose' Director of Strategic Planning and Associate Vice President of Assessment and Institutional Research. Tracy expertly led the process and its people with precision, care, and delightful humor.

The year-long process of creating this plan has been an inclusive one, involved students, parents, faculty and staff, grandparents, alumni, and community leaders. We began with an invitation to all members of our community. We held planning kickoff meetings sessions and asked all constituencies for ideas, concerns, and celebrations. We used themes generated during those sessions to select individual Strategic Planning Committee members that would best investigate and articulate the groups' ideas.

The Strategic Planning Committee developed a survey to investigate critical themes and ideas. All email addresses on file received an electronic survey. The responses helped guide the rest of the process and inform goals, benchmarks, and timelines. Several meetings and countless emails refined and polished this plan. Once in final draft form, Mr. Roach met with individual classes ranging from kindergarten to 11th grade to discuss major themes and get a final round of feedback from where it matters most — our students and children.

Using the plan's final draft, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees took some time to freshen up the school's Mission Statement. The Mission Statement and Strategic Plan will be touchstones for progress toward the goals listed herein. This plan is a living document. Like our beloved historic school itself, the school and its outcomes will only get better with time.

Draft Mission Statement: Rivermont Collegiate cultivates academically driven students' inherent excellence through the pursuit of intellect, creativity, and above all, character.

## The Framework

The Strategic Plan is organized around four strategic areas that evolved from both stakeholder input and Rivermont Collegiate's vision for investing in their future.

Each of the four strategic areas listed below frame our goals as being investments. Investing our attention drives awareness of opportunities and the knowledge necessary to overcome challenges. Investing our effort represents mobilizing our community's vast expertise and skillsets. Investing our effort also represents our commitment to bettering ourselves and better serving the Rivermont Community. Investing our resources facilitates the actualization of plans and ideas, into results. Of course, resources include funding but also include much more. Facilities, materials, faculty and staff, community volunteers, curriculum, etc., are all examples of resources upon which we will draw, as we implement this plan.

If we invest wisely, Rivermont will enjoy the benefits of those investments tomorrow, and for generations to come. Children are always a wise investment and worthy of our attention, skills, and resources. Please read the list of strategic investments and consider how you may assist us by investing in Rivermont's future.

### Strategic Investments

#### **INVESTING IN TEACHERS**

Rivermont Collegiate is investing in hiring, retaining, and developing world-class teachers.

#### **INVESTING IN CURRICULUM, EVALUATION, AND PEDAGOGICAL EXPERTISE**

Rivermont Collegiate is investing in developing excellent curricula, and enhancing its expertise in curriculum design, pedagogical methods, and assessment/evaluation alignment.

#### **INVESTING IN STEAM**

Rivermont Collegiate is investing in developing world-class programs in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. This investment is a reflection of Rivermont's commitment to advancing the leaders and problem-solvers of tomorrow.

#### **INVESTING IN ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Rivermont Collegiate is investing in strengthening the connections between previous generations and those to come, both locally and globally.



### Strategic Area #1:

## INVESTING IN TEACHERS

A great teacher can change a student's life. It is not an exaggeration; it is a fact. The tradition of quality teaching at Rivermont Collegiate is rich with stories of talented teachers with content expertise and pedagogy to connect with students on multiple levels. A great teacher is the foundation of a great Rivermont education. It is imperative as Rivermont moves forward, to continue to attract and retain high-quality teachers, as well as to provide on-going professional development. Great teachers are great students at their core, committed to a lifetime of learning. As teachers prepare students for a future and careers that have yet to be defined, it is imperative that Rivermont provides its teachers the opportunity for a strong and rewarding professional career, as well as the tools to continue to grow as professionals and experts. Rivermont students are constantly developing, and Rivermont Collegiate must have highly developed teachers to grow with them.

### GOALS:

1. Attract and retain high-quality educators who have both deep knowledge and experience with their respective content areas and with child development.
2. Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to encourage increased content expertise, pedagogy, and leadership skills.



#### STRATEGIES:

- A. Review professional development models at peer institutions and provide recommendations for a professional development framework at Rivermont:
  - a. Provide opportunity for regular study and for collaboration of teachers,
  - b. Provide pedagogy development aligned with the Rivermont community (e.g., Talented and Gifted instruction, technology integration),
  - c. Provide content development to enhance teacher expertise, and
  - d. Engage with external experts and researchers in the field of education.
- B. Implement an employee satisfaction survey and administer this tool regularly. Utilize results to prioritize and implement change.
- C. Develop job descriptions (including additional duties) for all Rivermont employees. Review regularly.
- D. Develop a plan and budget for administering regular salary increases aligned with market.
- E. Review regional salary scales and work towards median goal.
- F. Celebrate professional excellence and growth, as well as career milestones.
- G. Articulate and implement an employee evaluation tool based on self-reflection and goal setting.



## Strategic Area #2:

### INVESTING IN CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

Beyond maintaining a solid teaching and administrative staff, it is essential for Rivermont Collegiate to invest in advancing both curriculum and pedagogy for its students to excel. An effective curriculum provides Rivermont teachers, students, administrators, and families with a measurable plan and structure for delivering a high-quality education. Within this curriculum, teachers provide the purposeful sequencing of teaching and learning expectations across multiple developmental stages and grade levels. Beyond a solid curriculum progression, however, Rivermont must hold true to its mission of excellence and college preparation. Through the development of both intentional and unique educational experiences, Rivermont teachers help students develop an understanding of life-long learning encompassing the mind, heart, and spirit in tangible experiences in scholarship, service, and performance both artistic and athletic.

#### GOALS:

3. Enhance the Rivermont curriculum to include a clear PS-12 progression of advancing skills and knowledge towards the ultimate goal of college readiness.
4. Strengthen and develop educational opportunities for PS-12 students to help create an experience unique to Rivermont that positions students for future achievement and life-long learning.
5. Provide global educational opportunities through the systematic integration of international students into the educational opportunities and experiences at Rivermont.



#### STRATEGIES:

- A. Provide professional development and the framework for establishing/revising curriculum.
- B. Establish grade level/subject level teams to align curriculum within and between grade levels, ensuring necessary skills and knowledge are addressed to move forward at each grade level.
- C. Review curriculum maps and adjust annually to ensure proper alignment and progression.
- D. Establish a process for the regular review of academic programs.
- E. Disseminate curriculum overview and grade level expectation documents to Rivermont students and families.
- F. Evaluate class schedule and yearly calendar to ensure that instructional time and professional development time are prioritized, as well as the need/demand on additional resources.
- G. Generate ideas for signature classroom experiences by grade and/or subject level teams.
- H. Establish developmentally appropriate opportunities to involve international students within the curriculum and shared student experience at Rivermont.



### Strategic Area #3:

## INVESTING IN STEAM

While Rivermont Collegiate sits tucked away on a wooded hill, its students live in a global time of constant scientific discovery and technological change - change that directly affects their lives today and will most certainly impact their future. As such, we must invest in STEAM education, which is ultimately an investment in our futures. Blending the traditional STEM fields with the Arts uniquely prepares Rivermont students to not only learn about, but take part in revolutionary new advances in the interconnected fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Investing in STEAM allows Rivermont to provide its students with the scientific knowledge to prepare them to meet the demands of the fast-paced changes both today and tomorrow, opening doors to not only colleges and future careers, but also to help prepare them as technologically literate members of a democratic society supported by the intellect, creative expression, participation, and character of its citizens.

#### GOALS:

6. Use technology to promote intellectual experimentation and transformational learning
7. Use technology to differentiate learning experiences so students may develop higher-order thinking and creative problem-solving skills.
8. Use technology to support student creative expression in the Arts.



#### STRATEGIES:

- A. Establish an interdisciplinary team of teachers to create STEAM curriculum overview, as well as support the integration of creativity in the general classroom.
- B. Provide intentional curricular opportunities for students to explore and create with technology.
- C. Provide professional development targeted at grade and/or subject level teachers, as well as needed resources to plan and implement STEAM-related units and lessons.
- D. Establish a technology curriculum specialist position with relevant STEAM experience to provide on-going support to teachers, students, and families.
- E. Create a STEAM advisory committee (a diverse team of stakeholders, including students) to regularly review technology needs and new possibilities.
- F. Secure on-going funding sources and budget to support STEAM center.



#### Strategic Area #4:

### INVESTING IN ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Rivermont Collegiate, with its history of over 130 years and three school names, reaches well beyond the PS-12 experience of its students. Annual traditions such as Imp and Tiger sorting are steeped in history and for many their first true step in joining our community. New traditions, however, are built upon the legacies of those who've come before and risen to the great challenge of a Rivermont education and its lasting rewards. The success of a Rivermont alum is not just about success in college, but also the success of life beyond our hilltop campus. We are a small community, stretching towards a larger global community. As such, we need to reconnect with alumni and make new connections with strategic partners both regionally and internationally, focusing on the importance of building relationships both within and outside of our current scope of influence.

#### GOALS:

9. Build a network of Rivermont alumni and friends who are engaged and will continue the tradition of community and excellence for generations to come.
10. Advance the Rivermont brand as a community of educational rigor and excellence evidenced by student success at local, regional, and national levels.
11. Leverage communication strategies to provide opportunities for engagement of alumni and guests.



#### STRATEGIES:

- A. Establish a formal Alumni Association to rediscover who our alumni are and enhance engagement with Rivermont.
  - a. Create a current alumni directory,
  - b. Establish annual alumni events,
  - c. Invite alumni to school functions, and provide engagement opportunities
  - d. Generate an “Alumni Spotlight” section within existing communications, and
  - e. Establish alumni engagement program to support student internships, guest speakers, field trips, connections to experts, mentoring, etc.
- B. Seek opportunities to earn national and international distinction for our students, teachers, and the school itself.
  - a. Enter local, regional, and national competitions and look at possibilities at each grade level
  - b. Increase marketing and recruitment efforts in key areas, such as rowing magazines, other educational organizations, Chamber of Commerce, major employers, domestic boarding consultants, etc.
  - c. Fully leverage the capacity of the website and social media to expand the reach of Rivermont’s good deeds.



## Summary

Rivermont Collegiate has been the Quad Cities' premier college-preparatory school since 1884. While the last few years have seen tremendous excitement and growth, we are always looking ahead and working to make tomorrow better than today. Rivermont's leadership and Board of Trustees are thankful to everyone who has taken time to collaborate in the creation of this plan. We feel that the mission rings as clearly as ever and that we're investing in the right initiatives, at the right time. Thanks to all those who have given so generously of their time and talent in helping set the course for our next several years!

*Continuing the Tradition*





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