



RIVERMONT COLLEGIATE Strategic Plan

2025-2030





Dear Members of the Rivermont Community,

It is with immense pride and great enthusiasm that I introduce Rivermont Collegiate's new Strategic Plan. This document represents not just a roadmap for the future but a reflection of our shared commitment to excellence and growth as we honor our school's legacy and position ourselves for even greater achievements.

On the heels of a wildly successful prior strategic plan, Rivermont has firmly established itself as a beacon of excellence in independent school curriculum, culture, and outcomes. Ranked the #1 prep school in Iowa and among the top 5% of schools nationwide, our accomplishments speak volumes about the dedication of our faculty, staff, students,

and families. These accolades are a testament to the strength of our community and the transformative education we provide.

So, where do we go from such impressive heights? Back to basics. This strategic plan builds on our considerable strengths, with a renewed focus on three key pillars:

1. **Ensuring Financial Sustainability:** We recognize the importance of a strong financial foundation. This plan prioritizes sustainable growth and resource management, ensuring Rivermont remains a vibrant and thriving institution for generations to come.
2. **Elevating Excellence:** We will continue to develop and enhance our programs, ensuring that every student is empowered to reach their full potential in academics, arts, athletics, and beyond. Our commitment to innovation in teaching and learning remains steadfast.
3. **Strengthening External Engagement:** As we look to the future, deepening our connections within the Quad Cities and beyond is essential. Building strong relationships and partnerships will enrich our school's culture and extend our influence in meaningful ways.

This strategic plan reflects not only our aspirations but also the collective input of our Rivermont family. It is a vision rooted in purpose and driven by a shared belief in the transformative power of education.

Together, we will write the next chapter of Rivermont Collegiate's story. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. I invite you to join us as we embark on this exciting new phase, embracing opportunities, overcoming challenges, and continuing to inspire excellence in all we do.

With gratitude and excitement,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Max Roach".

C. Max Roach

Headmaster, Rivermont Collegiate

Introduction

This strategic plan focuses on three professional, results-oriented priorities: Ensuring Financial Sustainability, Elevating Academic Excellence, and Strengthening External Engagement. These initiatives are designed to secure the school's long-term success, balancing ambitious academic goals, financial stability, and a deepened connection to the community and key stakeholders.



OUR MISSION:

Rivermont Collegiate empowers academically driven students by cultivating their intellect, character, and creativity.

- **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 VISION:

To be a leader in innovative education, nurturing a diverse community of students to reach their highest potential in scholarship, leadership, and service. Through a commitment to academic rigor, ethical growth, and creative exploration, we aspire to shape future leaders who are prepared to excel in a global society, driven by a passion for learning and a deep sense of responsibility.

History:

Building on Rivermont's History of Excellence & Forging a Bright and Sustainable Path Ahead

Rivermont Collegiate was originally organized as St. Katharine's School, an Episcopal boarding and day school for girls located in Davenport. The school thrived for over eighty years serving the needs of local girls and those from afar. In 1968, St. Katharine's dropped its boarding program, became coeducational, and added St. Mark's to its name.

In 1973, St. Katharine's-St. Mark's (SKSM) moved to its 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.

In 2017, the school embraced its heritage by introducing a coeducational boarding program, welcoming both local and international students.

Two years later, the STEAM Center further enhanced the boarding facilities. Being the sole college preparatory school from Preschool through 12th Grade in the Quad Cities, Rivermont has provided an educational alternative to public and parochial schooling for over 140 years, catering to the community and its families.



About This Strategic Planning Process:

Between the Fall of 2022 and the Spring of 2024, Rivermont Collegiate underwent an exhaustive accreditation process through the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), the data and outcomes of which form the basis for this strategic plan. The timing for this accreditation cycle's self-study coincided perfectly with the reporting on outcomes of our former strategic plan (1999-2024) and the school's need to create a new one, which will take effect on January 1, 2025.

The accreditation self-study process requires that all constituencies be included in reporting the school's relative strengths and areas of opportunity. The goals stated in the previous strategic plan (2019-2024) were in the final stages of being accomplished when the ISACS constituent surveys were sent out. Committees representing the board of trustees, faculty & staff, students, and families contribute to self-study reports. Self-study reports include constituency survey data and information such as progress made since the last accreditation, areas of programmatic strength, and areas of opportunity. Following

the submission of our self-study report, a team of independent school experts review the self-study and spend several days visiting and inspecting our campus, during which time they draft an official Visiting Team Report, which is then submitted to the ISACS Accreditation Review Committee, along with their recommendations regarding accreditation status.

Rivermont received a glowing full accreditation report, specifically praising tremendous progress made in the areas of need outlined in the previous strategic plan. In fact, it was the most positive accreditation report in over 20 years! The Board of Trustees reviewed the Major Commendations and Major Recommendations listed in the Accreditation Review Committee's Accreditation Report. Trustees collaborated to prioritize three key initiatives that build on our strengths while also improving on areas of need. These initiatives, listed below, incorporate many sub-goals, which were born from our community, a team of external expert advisors, and the ISACS Accreditation Review Committee.

OUR THREE KEY INITIATIVES ARE:

- ▶ **Ensure Financial Sustainability**
- ▶ **Elevate Academic Excellence**
- ▶ **Strengthen External Engagement**



As the timing of our strategic planning process aligned with our accreditation review so beautifully, our intention is to repeat the dual-purpose process and create a new strategic plan when our self-study is required again in 2029/30.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Ensure Financial Sustainability:

Objective Overview: To achieve long-term financial sustainability through strategic growth in both day and boarding student populations while maximizing revenue generation and operational efficiency. This initiative includes expanding boarding capacity, optimizing day student recruitment and retention, and implementing industry best practices to reduce the school's deficit and enhance overall financial stability.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through a combination of strategic growth, operational efficiency, and expert consultation, this initiative will provide both immediate and sustained financial impact:



- **Incremental Revenue Growth from Boarding Capacity Expansion:** Projected an additional \$368,000-460,000 annually once full capacity is reached, generating a projected \$1,200,600 (at 90% occupancy) by the end of Year 5.
- **Net Revenue Goal per Boarding Student:** \$23,000 annually, maintained through aggressive marketing and efficient cost management as capacity grows.
- **Day Student Revenue Optimization:** In collaboration with Amperage Marketing, aggressive advertising, and incentivization/partnership programs increased day student enrollment by 5% annually. Potential improvements and efficiencies from ISM-recommended operational efficiencies also contributed to this increase.
- **International Revenue Streams:** Additional revenue through targeted international partnerships, summer programs, and exchanges

This comprehensive approach to financial sustainability leverages capital expansion, strategic partnerships, and best practices to ensure long-term stability and success.

BOARDING CAPACITY EXPANSION AND REVENUE GROWTH

Goal: Increase boarding capacity from 42 to 58 students, generating \$23,000 in net revenue per student. Within three years, the financial deficit will be reduced by an additional \$368,000 (annually). With a boarding capacity of 58 students, generating an average of \$23,000/year, the boarding program, once fully built out, can generate \$1,334,000 annually.

Actions:

- Conduct an updated buildout cost study to determine expenses for expanding boarding facilities.
- Secure funding for the buildout.
- Complete renovations to prepare for expanded capacity.
- Increase travel and recruiting budget, traveling more to develop relationships and recruit students.

KPIs:

- Complete renovations and increase boarding capacity to 58 students.
- Reach 90% full boarding capacity.

DAY STUDENT ENROLLMENT GROWTH AND OPTIMIZATION

Goal: Increase day student enrollment by 5% over two years to maintain or improve net revenue/student while optimizing expenses associated with the increased day student population.

Actions:

- Launch targeted local marketing campaigns within a 50-mile radius, emphasizing the value of day student enrollment.
- Develop partnerships with local, national, and international middle schools to build a pipeline of day students.
- Increase new revenue while minimizing additional expenses.
- Conduct regular reviews of day student retention rates and satisfaction to maintain retention goals aligned with NAIS standards.



KPIs:

- Increase enrollment by 5% annually.
- Achieve or surpass NAIS Averages in the following areas:
- Completed Applications to Inquiries Rate: 47%
- Acceptances to Completed Applications Rate: 65%
- Newly Enrolled to Acceptances Rate 71%

INVESTMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Attract international boarding students through strategic investments in travel, recruitment agent relationships, and family satisfaction initiatives to enhance enrollment and revenue.

Actions:

- Evaluate and adjust the annual international travel and engagement budget to build relationships with agents and prospective families.
- Organize semi-annual meetings with recruitment agents to identify potential leads and new markets.
- Launch a “Global Family Ambassadors” program, inviting current international families to share their experiences with prospective students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of international recruitment efforts and adjust strategies to maintain or increase international enrollment.

EXPANSION OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: Create additional revenue streams through international partnerships and exchange programs while expanding the school’s global reach.

Actions:

- Identify and establish at least three international partnerships in key regions with high interest in preparatory education.
- Develop and pilot short-term exchange or summer programs to attract international students and generate additional revenue.
- Evaluate the financial impact of these partnerships, refine the program offerings, and target new markets as appropriate.

KPIs:

- Add two new dual diploma partners
- Develop and launch one international (boarding) summer camp every two years.



CONSULTATION WITH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (ISM)

Goal: Maximize efficiency and revenue generation from the day student population through a partnership with ISM to benchmark current practices and implement best practices.

Actions:

- Conduct an initial consultation with ISM to outline goals and gather baseline data on current enrollment, tuition, and financial aid policies.
- Complete a comprehensive analysis with ISM, comparing current practices to recommended industry standards and identifying areas for improvement.
- Develop an action plan with ISM's recommendations, focusing on tuition optimization, financial aid policies, and marketing strategies.
- Roll out enhanced recruitment and marketing strategies for day students, including partnerships with local schools.
- Continue monitoring and adjusting strategies with ISM support to improve revenue and efficiency for day student enrollment.

KPIs:

- Increase net tuition yields by 15% among day students
- Increase net tuition by 10% among boarding students

PARTNERSHIP WITH AMPERAGE FOR MARKETING AND ADMISSIONS SUPPORT

Goal: Strengthen and refine marketing and admissions strategies with the expertise of Amperage, a company experienced in branding, digital marketing, and enrollment growth for educational institutions. This

collaboration will help ensure our messaging resonates with domestic and international families, increasing applications and yield rates. This investment will increase application numbers, improve yield, and strengthen the school's market position, contributing to sustained enrollment growth and financial stability. This partnership will also ensure that our marketing and admissions practices are data-driven, aligned with current trends, and positioned to effectively reach our target audiences.

Actions:

- Initiate a collaboration with Amperage to assess the effectiveness of current marketing strategies, branding, and messaging. Set clear goals for increasing application numbers and improving conversion rates.
- Based on Amperage's recommendations, implement a refreshed marketing strategy. The strategy should focus on digital outreach, social media engagement, and targeted messaging that aligns with our school's unique value propositions for both day and boarding students.



- Track and analyze key metrics, such as application numbers, conversion rates, and enrollment yield. Based on the data, adjust marketing efforts to maximize return on investment and enrollment success.
- Work with Amperage to develop a series of parent and student testimonials, case studies, and video content to enhance the school's digital presence and increase engagement with prospective families.
- Evaluate the impact of Amperage's marketing enhancements on overall enrollment and adjust strategies as necessary to sustain long-term growth in both day and boarding populations.

KPIs:

Enrollment Goals:

- Year 1: 200
- Year 2: 210
- Year 3: 220
- Year 4: 230
- Year 5: 240
- Year 6: 250

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMPLETION

Goal: Complete a 5-million-dollar campaign focused on rebuilding the endowment, finishing construction on the STEAM center, and sustaining operations during the buildout. Finishing the construction of the STEAM building would add 8-10 rooms, which would house 16-20 students and generate between \$360,000-460,000/year in additional revenue.

Actions:

- Establish National Campaign Advisory Committee
- Develop campaign structure and align giving opportunities with both donor's preferences and the school's strategic needs.

- Develop a timeline and key actions within the quiet and public phases of the campaign.
- Develop gift tables and donor profiles, assign individuals to make asks, follow up, and thank as appropriate.
- Develop print and video materials needed for the campaign.
- Develop and engage in a variety of events, differentiated as appropriate to various constituencies (alumni, donors, media, general public, international and day students' families, etc.)

KPIs:

- Obtain funds to support operational deficits until program revenue can support school operations (4M).
- Obtain sufficient funds to complete the STEAM center dormitory (estimated 700K).
- Reconstitute the EE Ford Endowed Fund (80K).
- Reconstitute the Waterman Endowed Fund (120K)

FUTURE — CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO PAY OFF DEBT

Bonus Goal: Eliminating the school's debt service will reduce projected cash expenses by \$324,000 annually. Together with the additional revenue from a completed STEAM center dormitory, the school should be able to allocate cash surpluses to rebuilding the endowment, updating facilities, and other essential capital projects. Once the above goals have been met, the school should invest its effort in eliminating the debt. Barring an angel donor, this goal will likely carry over into the next strategic planning cycle.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Elevate Academic Excellence

Goal 1: Rivermont has been nationally and internationally recognized as a shining example of independent school excellence in curriculum culture and outcomes. It is essential that this plan continues that outstanding record of achievement. Therefore, we will continue to improve Rivermont's educational reputation by enhancing curricular offerings, showcasing innovative teaching practices, and celebrating students' academic achievements.

Key actions:

- Improve the academic achievement of Rivermont students by developing a comprehensive in-house tutoring and enrichment program.
- Develop and implement capstone projects aligned to curricular benchmarks at the JK, 5th, 8th, and 12th grade levels.

- Cultivate faculty excellence by increasing individualized professional development opportunities, encouraging innovative pedagogy, and recognizing teacher distinctions.
- Enhancing experiential learning opportunities, participating in academic competitions and events, and highlighting student achievements via local and social media will increase Rivermont students' visibility within the local and global communities.

KPIs

- Increase average scores on standardized tests (MAP tests, Iowa Assessments, PSAT, SAT, ACT, APs) by 10 percent over the next 5 years.
- Improve student retention at all levels (ES, LS, MS, and US) by 10 percent over the next 5 years.



- Increase the number of qualified student applicants (both domestic and boarding) by 25% over the next 7 years.
- Increase by 25% over the next 7 years the number of positive media stories about Rivermont students or teachers.

Goal 2: Develop and implement innovative programs across the developmental spectrum, such as capstone projects, honors tracks, or declared majors within the upper grades.

Key Actions:

- Design and pilot capstone projects or honors programs in grades JK, 5, 8, and 12 that allow for student choice and showcase growth.
- Create a declared majors program for upper-grade students, allowing them to specialize in areas of interest (e.g., STEM, Humanities, Arts).
- Establish interdisciplinary projects that integrate these programs with real-world applications, such as partnerships with local businesses or universities.
- Embed flexible scheduling and instructional models to support personalized learning in these programs.

KPIs:

- Program Participation Rates: Track enrollment numbers in capstone projects, honors tracks, and majors, aiming for a 10% increase in student participation each year.
- Student Outcomes: Measure student performance in these programs through project-based assessments, with 90% of participants achieving proficiency in their final projects.
- College Placement and Merit Scholarships:

- Train students to communicate their participation in these programs in college and scholarship applications as a distinguishing achievement.
- Track and report program alumni who receive acceptances or merit-based scholarships to targeted or selective colleges.

Goal 3: Continue to serve as a model for independent school curriculum and instruction, articulating our unique approach to differentiated support for academically inclined students across all grade levels.

Key Actions:

- Document and publish case studies on the school's differentiated instruction practices and curriculum innovations.
- Expand access to challenging coursework and support structures, such as advanced classes for younger grades and individualized tutoring for advanced topics.
- Host annual symposia on independent school curriculum and instruction excellence, inviting other institutions to participate and learn from our model.
- Implement school-wide best practices training for differentiated learning, emphasizing how to support diverse academic needs within the classroom.

KPIs:

- Parent and Student Satisfaction: Measure satisfaction rates on annual surveys, aiming for 95% of families to report feeling well-supported academically.
- External Recognition: Secure at least three external speaking or publication opportunities annually to showcase the school's approach to differentiated learning.

- Advanced Placement (AP) Enrollment: Increase the percentage of students enrolling in AP or advanced courses by 5% annually.

Goal 4: Cultivate excellence in teaching faculty through professional development, enhanced salaries and benefits, retention efforts, and encouragement of individual and collective distinctions.

Key Actions:

- Establish an annual professional development fund, allocating specific amounts for teachers pursuing certifications or advanced degrees.
- Conduct bi-annual check-ins to support teacher well-being and ensure teachers feel valued and heard in their roles.
- Offer incentives for teachers who further distinguish themselves professionally.
- Develop a formal teacher recognition program that highlights exceptional instructional contributions, innovations, and student impact.

KPIs:

- Teacher Retention Rate: Maintain excellent teacher retention rates of above 85% and report to the board on teacher turnover annually.
- Professional Distinctions: Track the number of faculty recognized for their teaching excellence (e.g., awards, certifications), with a goal of 10% of faculty achieving recognition yearly.
- Professional Development Participation: Ensure at least 100% of faculty engage in externally offered professional development opportunities annually.

Goal 5: Enhance outcomes on key academic metrics such as AP exams taken, scores attained, standardized test scores, and merit-based scholarships.

Actions:

- Implement individualized AP and SAT/ACT preparation support for upper school students to maximize their potential on the exams.
- Develop a mentorship program connecting juniors and seniors with seniors or recent alumni who have received merit-based scholarships.
- Conduct an annual review of curriculum and instruction in AP and standardized testing areas, aligning instructional practices with testing objectives.
- Establish stretch goals for both scores and scholarship awards, shared school-wide to foster a culture of high achievement.

KPIs:

- AP Exam Participation and Scores: Increase the number of AP exams taken by 5% each year
- Increase the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher by 5% each year.
- SAT/ACT, MAP, and Iowa Tests Score Improvement: Track year-over-year improvements, aiming for a 5% increase in average test scores.
- Merit-Based Scholarships: Increase the total amount of scholarships awarded to graduating students by 5% annually.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Strengthen External Engagement

Build strong relationships with the broader community, alumni, and key external stakeholders, fostering an engaged and supportive network that will contribute to the school's success and visibility.

Key Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive marketing and outreach plan that promotes the school's mission and enhances its local and global profile, particularly for recruiting international and domestic students.
- Expand community partnerships by hosting events, workshops, and networking opportunities that bring together local businesses, civic organizations, and prospective families.

- Launch targeted alumni outreach and engagement campaigns to foster lifelong connections and increase alumni contributions to key initiatives, such as scholarships and faculty support.

KPIs:

- Host at least four community engagement events annually and increase media and social media engagement by 20%.
- Grow alumni giving by 15% over the next five years and increase alumni participation in events and mentoring programs by 20% annually.
- Increase enrollment inquiries through targeted marketing by 10% year-over-year.



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