Riverdale

MIND · CHARACTER · COMMITMENT · COMMUNITY
…developing disciplined, passionate and innovative thinkers for the future

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

❖ **DEVELOPING MINDS (LEARNING + THINKING)**

- **read actively, applying different reading strategies to different types of texts**
- **learn to manage one's time and develop effective study skills**
- **learn + think independently, innovatively, creatively, critically, actively** (apply knowledge in useful experiential tasks, evaluate information and evidence, see patterns, generate novel responses, ask good questions, analyze and construct arguments, learn how to organize your thoughts in different ways, question assumptions and accepted "truths")
- **develop independent research skills and learn how to apply such skills to research in different contexts.**

  ❖ **LEARNING + THINKING IN AND ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES (responsibility of the academic departments)**
  - acquire disciplinary knowledge while mastering the language of each discipline
  - understand the key conceptual frameworks, the essential questions and the rules of evidence in each discipline.
  - use disciplinary knowledge in authentic contexts
  - transfer knowledge from one context to another within and across disciplines

❖ **BUILDING CHARACTER**

- **be strong (**self-disciplined, resilient and perseverant—understanding that true excellence is a result of effort)
- **be honest and be open** (supportive to different ideas, different cultures and different people)
- **act wisely** (learn how to evaluate one's thinking and make wise decisions)
- **be safe, healthy and fit**

❖ **INSPIRING COMMITMENT**

- **engage broadly in school work and activities while exploring passions** (balance participation in co-curricular activities with one's academic obligations—promote curiosity, service-oriented young people who are aware and thoughtful about current global issues)
- **live sustainably** (learn how to use resources wisely and sustainably)
- **act ethically** (honest while behaving responsibly in accordance with School and community standards, demonstrate a high sense of personal integrity, be just and equitable)

❖ **FOSTERING COMMUNITY**

- **understand & embrace difference** (creative, innovative, live "outside of the box")
- **work collaboratively** (working effectively on tasks and projects & knowing how to work in high-performing teams composed of diverse individuals, thoughtful in terms of the community)
- **communicate in an effective manner using a variety of "languages"** (understand audience and purpose while presenting ideas and expressing oneself in a variety of ways using different means [writing, orally, quantitatively, visually…])
- **serve others** (both in the local, national and global communities)

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES & PLANS THAT SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THE SCHOOL:

❖ **MAKING THE RIVERDALE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION A REALITY:**
- DEVELOP THE **IDENTITY OF THE SCHOOL** AND COMMUNICATE TO ALL CONSTITUENTS.
- USE **THE MAJOR SCHOOL THEMES** (MIND, CHARACTER, COMMITMENT & COMMUNITY) TO COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL'S STRENGTHS AND TO FORTIFY THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.
- CREATE **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THREADS** AROUND EACH OF THE APPROPRIATE INITIATIVES BELOW
- **REORGANIZE THE INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT** TO KEEP THE SCHOOL EFFICIENT AND FISCALLY SUSTAINABLE.
- **LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**.
- **RAISE MORE ENDOWMENT FUNDS + CUT COSTS**.
- **DEVELOP A STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (R+D FUND) TO HELP PROMOTE TEACHER ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL IS A LEADER IN EDUCATION**.

MIND & CHARACTER

I. IMPROVE FACULTY RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION WITH THE CREATION OF AN ENDOWED FACULTY SUPPORT FUND.

- **Create MIND & CHARACTER TEAMS/CENTERS on both campuses (Director of Student Learning, Director of Teaching & Learning + Librarians+IT).**
- **FACULTY RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**
  - **Improve FACULTY SALARIES AND BENEFITS**
  - **Establish STANDARDS FOR FACULTY PERFORMANCE and tie it to an ANNUAL EVALUATION SYSTEM with consequences for compensation.**

II. SUPPORT GOOD LEARNING + THINKING

- **Create MIND & CHARACTER CENTERS (support student and faculty learning, work at creating a common language of learning and thinking institution-wide while running all professional development for teachers throughout the institution, forming and maintaining research partnerships).**
- **Create and implement a clear PLAN FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY to support a student-centered learning throughout the school with necessary upstaffing in order to implement(implementation of a Learning Management System—MOODLE)**
- **Work to create more DISCUSSION-BASED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES for the students. Start to create discussion criteria and assessments.**
- **Develop and use a clear "LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND THINKING" throughout the institution while finding, developing and using good assessments of thinking and learning throughout the institution [CLA]. Develop ways to teach more effectively ARGUMENTATION AND INQUIRY through classroom-based discussion, a common vocabulary and assessments, especially in the MS and US.**
- **Form an ARTS COUNCIL, chaired by the Headmaster, to help support the arts institutionally, with the additional support of an Arts Fund.**

III. REFINE THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- **Establish a working group with a part-time coordinator to work on making sense of the LAST TWO YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL that: promotes interdisciplinary study, creates a sensible and fair evaluation system, provides more opportunities for developing leadership skills, offers comprehensive opportunities for deep engagement in some field or activity, and ensures that every senior submits a proficient research project.**

- **REVISE THE SCHEDULE to help diminish stress and improve student learning.**
- **Continue working on establishing CLEAR DISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES in each of the departments that link with both FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS pre-K-12 and with the school-wide outcomes listed in this document.**
- **Work to improve literacy at all levels and support reading in all grades through an institutional LITERACY PROJECT.**

IV. POSITIVE EDUCATION+ACCOMPLISHMENT

- **Work on DEFINING THE CHARACTER OUTCOMES and suffusing the school culture with the development of these character traits and ethical decision-making. Work on formally assessing such traits.**
- **Create a part-time COORDINATOR OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND OUTREACH position to run and develop programs with other institutions.**
- **Develop and implement a PARTNERSHIP WITH KIPP-RCS AND UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA focusing on the development of positive capacities in children in school settings. The project will have two strands: 1. Professional development plenary sessions with Seligman and guests over the course of two years (4 visits/year) including resilience training for teachers. 2. Research study on the development of "grit" and resilience in younger students.**
- **Build off the Lower School C.A.R.E program by developing a CLEAR INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF BEHAVIOR with explicit consequences for students across the whole school.**
- **Develop a comprehensive and individualized ADVISING PROGRAM that works with the dean system.**

COMMITMENT & COMMUNITY

V. ENGAGE IN SERVICE WHILE BUILDING COMMUNITY

- **Create a GLOBAL AND SERVICE LEARNING OFFICE to help run all the following programs (DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICE, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL STUDIES + DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY)**
    - **Create a COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM K-12 at the school for all students. DEVELOP A NEW VERSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE that is suffused throughout the school program and is not dependent upon "hours served". All off-campus programs should include some service component. Create a "DAY OF SERVICE" opportunity for the entire community.**
- **Create part-time INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY DIRECTOR positions that serve on the Administrative Group. Make a strong INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY in the school and create an organizational structure for fostering diversity and good thinking about diversity at the school (racial, socio-economic, gender, learning…). Work to RECRUIT AND RETAIN MORE FACULTY OF COLOR at the school by using the FACULTY SUPPORT FUND to allow for upstaffing.**
- **Join the CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' LIVES and conduct an ongoing audit of the climate of the school and to conduct action research.**
- **INCREASE FINANCIAL AID over the course of the next ten years using fundraising and a draw from the endowment. Create a FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE to create guidelines and a philosophy for financial aid. Offer more financial aid to middle-class families.**
- **Create a few manageable ENDOWED GLOBAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS with communities around the world that will allow for service opportunities, global exchange and curricular development.**

VI. IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY

- Work with several consultants (sustainability experts, campus planners and architects, design firms) to REDESIGN THE RIVER CAMPUS based on the educational objectives of the Lower School and a commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Continue to develop and refine a LONG-TERM FINANCIAL+FACILITIES MODEL/PLAN for the school while using and growing the endowment. Ensure that the school is FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE and that, as we grow the endowment, we are also looking at areas where savings can be made that do not affect the essential quality of the educational program. REDUCE THE SCHOOL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT by 30% in the next five years as part of our pledge with the Green Schools Alliance. Develop and implement an ENERGY MANAGEMENT SOLUTION, IT NETWORKS AND CENTRALIZED SECURITY SYSTEM for both campuses.

VII. FIND BALANCE

- Work at making Riverdale a SUSTAINABLE PLACE IN WHICH TO LEARN AND WORK (work with the Energy Project).
- BALANCE WORK, RELAXATION AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES such as the arts and athletics by conducting a study of student expectations (homework, testing etc), college admissions expectations and trends in education and enacting some considered changes to the overall educational program. STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY AND PARTICIPATION OF THE ARTS AND ATHLETICS PROGRAMS BY FORMING A POWERFUL STUDENT LIFE DECISION-MAKING GROUP.
- IMPROVE OUR ATHLETICS FACILITIES on the Hill campus (turf field, redo the present Hill campus gymnasium to improve the facility and be able to use it as a place for school meetings, second gymnasium, move tennis courts from LS campus to Hill Campus, Squash racquet facility)
- Use our ARTS FACILITIES more effectively to bring together the community and to provide more high quality experiences for students interested in pursuing the arts.