

# Riverdale Thought Exchange Data Artifact

**Summary:** The following data was collected through a community-wide Thought Exchange in the fall of 2022. Over 1400 qualitative pieces of data were collected from students, caregivers, and staff. That data was processed and organized over the course of two, two-hour facilitated sessions by 26 members of the community, whose membership included caregivers, teachers, classified staff and administrators. This data was used to develop a new strategic plan for the Riverdale School District and to judge the overall interests of the district's stakeholders at this time. The summaries below were created by data sort teams consisting of representatives of various stakeholder groups including parents, community members, student and school staff. They represent the culmination of an extensive data sort that involved coding various comments and suggestions, grouping them by theme, and eventually producing these written summaries of the data to inform the future work of the district. Information below is presented in order of significance by how many comments or agreements were made with the idea through the Thought Exchange process. Original data is maintained by the district in confidential form.

## [Riverdale Thought Exchange Data Processing Protocol Artifact](#)

### **District Identity & Sustainability**

- **Grade School to High School Streamlining/Consistency:** This grouping is about streamlining policies/procedures throughout the district. The idea is to have consistency in activities, courses, policies and expectations for the high school and grade school.
- **High School Students Helping at Grade School:** This grouping is about bringing students from the high school to the grade school for different activities such as being teacher assistance, field trip chaperones, tutors etc.
- **Class Sizes:** This grouping is about reviewing class size policies and keeping class sizes small. Ideal class sizes would be around 20 and/or below the state average.
- **Marketing:** Should focus on what our HS offers and reflect a greater emphasis on STEAM. Our website should equal the quality of our "competitor schools." There should be proactive communication with grade school families to emphasize the strengths of our high school.
- **Extra-curricular suggestions include:** internship programs, early release for clubs, team building, expand (winter) sports, band, more pep assemblies, science club, drivers ed, clubs that promote inclusion, field study programs, service learning opportunities

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- **Course offerings and rigor of courses:** There is a collective ask for more diverse offerings with student voice represented as example: integrated technology, more diverse offerings, environmental, more arts. Need to support academic excellence as well as increased support for students with IEP, add IB programming, and AP programming.
- **Community Building:** Work to retain more families, add more diverse students and staff, focusing on equity and inclusion. More community involvement in HS, as example attending games, plays etc. Forging community partnerships, celebrating student achievement, building School Culture, and implementing building activities
- **Miscellaneous:** Systemic admin decision making ex. Better enrollment projections, Administration and policy procedural suggestions
- **Executive Summary for District Identity & Sustainability:** The responses for District Identity & Sustainability produced eight overarching themes: District streamlining, marketing, community building, course offerings/rigor, class sizes and other operational items. The theme with highest priority is community building. Responders feel strongly about building partnerships throughout the district and with the community at large. Many responses also alluded to the need for a stronger school culture and positive team building activities within the schools. Our student data showed that students feel their teacher know them, there is a positive culture and they have good friends. Overall the responses showed a desire for the district to come together and be harmonious in our expectations, policies and procedures and to showcase our strengths to the community and prospective families.

### Learning and Instruction

- **Experiential Learning K-12:** Desire for more field studies and learning driven by student interest; project-based learning within the classroom; apprenticeships for high school students (located at the grade school and within the community); classes that support life-skills with a focus on the following: learning center, financial literacy, mechanics, leadership training, decision-making, and culinary arts.
- **Curriculum - Director:** District-level curriculum director: provides instructional coaching to classroom teachers; supports district alignment (time for teachers to work together K-12 within subject areas); coordinates curriculum alignment opportunities (dedicated professional development for teachers to align curriculum with standards).

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- **Curriculum - STEAM:** This grouping is about integrated math and science opportunities K-12; double down on the basics of math instruction, advanced placement options, and more diverse math and science electives. Provide facilities and equipment for a variety of science classes like chemistry; development of a robust fine arts program with state-of-the-art space (drama, music, visual arts).
- **Curriculum - Second Language:** This grouping is about offering more diverse language options: Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and ASL; start second languages at an earlier grade level (offer Spanish K-5)
- **Small Class Sizes:** Decrease class sizes and/or increase the qualified staff to student ratio in classrooms.
- **Specialized Instruction:** More support for ADHD/ADD students and SPED-identified students, teacher education around differentiation, and more instructional assistants within the classroom to help support both students and teachers. In addition, support for students identified as Talented and Gifted with professional development in implementing extensions within and outside of the classroom.
- **Grade School Vice Principal:** Support for the Grade School administrator with behavior, evaluations, and other administrative duties in order to put the principal in the classrooms with teachers and students on a daily basis.
- **AP/Honors/IB:** Offer more Advanced Placement classes for students at the high school and/or become an International Baccalaureate school that will provide a rigorous and personal academic opportunity for students at the high school.

### Community and Belonging

- **Connection:** This grouping focuses on developing connection among constituencies within the district, with particular emphasis on connection between the grade school and high school and integration of out-of-district students and families.
- **Attitude:** This grouping concerns the attitude and culture of treating each other within the district.
- **DEI:** This grouping concerns district efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Community Involvement:** This grouping addresses the ways in which the district engages the district “community,” to include expanding interactions between diverse groups of students (across ages), parents, district residents, alumni, and the broader regional community.

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- **Non-sport activities:** This grouping is focused on the expansion and promotion of extra-curricular activities outside of athletics.
- **School Spirit:** This grouping is about promoting and enhancing connections and belonging between and within the schools.
- **Sports:** This grouping concerns athletics as a community-builder.
- **Communication:** This grouping is about how the district communicates and promotes communication among groups.
- **Off-campus learning:** This grouping is about promotion of learning activities outside the school grounds.
- **Service:** This grouping specifically addresses community service contributions.
- **Staffing:** This grouping focuses on activities to address staff needs.
- **Bullying:** This grouping covers peer-to-peer mistreatment.

*\* In addition, there were a few comments that received lots of support in the Thought Exchange around enforcement of the cell phone use policy, particularly for elementary/middle school students.*

### Campus Safety and Design

- **Facilities:** This grouping is about facility upgrades and improvements and includes examples such as, adding air conditioning, building a performing arts center, science and technology improvements etc.
- **Campus Safety and Security:** This grouping is about adding additional cameras, securing doors and access to campuses and improving safety plans and drills.
- **Outdoor Spaces:** This grouping is about improving outdoor spaces such as covered seating areas, athletic fields and track, and playgrounds, etc.
- **Parking and Transportation:** This grouping is about enhancing lighting, adding public transportation options, improving parking flow and the number of spaces, and providing safe walking access (sidewalks).
- **Bullying and Discrimination:** This grouping is about having more action around bullying and behavioral issues and providing more access to gender neutral facilities.
- **Off Campus Lunch:** This grouping is about allowing students to leave campus during lunch and increasing the lunch offerings.
- **Attendance:** This grouping is about allowing more flexibility around sports participation and absences.

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## Communication and Connection

- **Student/Teacher Communication:** Students surveyed feel communication with teachers is positive, this included student comments like, "I love my teacher" and saying their teachers are "nice" or "friendly".
- **HS/GS Connect:** There were many requests and suggestions for more connection between schools, cross pollinate students for events, Q&As for middle school, field days, and increased transportation between campuses.
- **HS Marketing, Websites, Outreach:** Many respondents to our thought exchange requested updates to the HS Website including athletics updates, updated calendars, teacher profiles, and sharing weekly highlights.
- **Newsletter/District Communication/District Marketing:** Lots of input asking for more streamlined newsletter, and increased communication from district, back to school communication, update websites, increase communication with parents.
- **Delete Neg Social Media aimed at staff/Manage online gossip:** Many teachers have expressed how unproductive, uncomfortable and hurtful it is to have a Facebook group talking about teachers instead of partnering and speaking with staff. Staff are excluded from joining this group, even staff with children attending RGS and RHS. If you can't say it to a person, you shouldn't be saying it about a person.
- **Experiential Learning/Extracurriculars:** A call for more internship opps. hire a field studies coordinator, more field studies, experiential learning, improve student professional field experience, extracurricular and community school/aftercare options.
- **All Community Meetings:** Requests for regular Town Halls, Board meetings at both the HS and GS, involve broader community in service and use district facilities for community events.
- **More SEL as part of curriculum:** Parents are requesting more public speaking, peer mentorship, students want more instruction on how to think positive.
- **Surveys/Data:** Thought exchange showed many requests for more. More surveys and communication data, as well as a better response to data.