

# THE DISTRICT DISPATCH

School News & Updates  
for the School District 197  
Community

**Spring 2024**



*Eighth graders learn about automotive classes in the Technical Education Department at Two Rivers during their high school tour.*

## WHAT'S INSIDE

**Two Rivers Senior Secures QuestBridge Scholarship**

**Our Strategic Framework Journey**

**School Board Reflects on Strategic Framework**

**Elevating Student Voice in Education**

**Our Approach to College and Career Readiness**

**Teaching Social-Emotional Learning Skills**

**And more!**

## From the Superintendent

It's hard to believe this spring marks the fourth anniversary of implementing our School District 197 Strategic Framework. Reflecting on our journey, I'm incredibly proud of all the work our framework has made possible.

At the same time, it's important to note the timing of its adoption in the spring of 2020—right as the COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold. The pandemic brought challenges but underscored the importance of the goals outlined in our strategic framework. Focusing on social-emotional learning, we recognized the need to prioritize mental health and well-being for staff and students. Little did we know then how crucial these priorities would become in navigating such challenging times. Now, as we look ahead, we remain committed to building upon the foundation laid by our Strategic Framework.

In this issue of the District Dispatch, we're taking a closer look at our Strategic Framework—the planning process, our goals, and our current initiatives. From social-emotional learning and equitable systems and supports to College and Career Readiness—you'll see our commitment to nurturing, inspiring, and preparing our students in our daily work.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we continue to move forward and build upon our work.

Peter Olson-Skog, Superintendent

**Nurture. Inspire. Prepare. Together, we thrive.**



# Two Rivers Senior Arina Axinia Secures Full-Ride QuestBridge Scholarship

Arina Axinia, a Two Rivers High School senior, has been awarded a full-ride, four-year scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania through the QuestBridge National College Match program, which connects high-achieving high school seniors with scholarships to top colleges.

## Beginning with a Learning Curve

Arina began her educational journey with School District 197 in kindergarten at Mendota Elementary after immigrating from Romania with her parents. "I remember the first day of school going to kindergarten," Arina shared. "My parents taught me two phrases in English; they had faith in me that I would learn the rest."

With the help of her teachers, she learned both English and the classroom curriculum that all the other students were learning. Arina believes the personalized learning and caring staff helped her quickly learn the language and grow and thrive in other ways. "They never let my language barrier be a burden," Arina shared. "I went from a struggling ESL (English as a Second Language) student to catching up with my peers in schoolwork, to eventually becoming a part of the gifted and talented program at the school."

Now a senior at Two Rivers High School, Arina continues to thrive. Beyond excelling academically, she is involved in Speech and Debate, Link Crew, Digital Wellbeing Club, National Honor Society, Editor-in-Chief for the Yearbook, and serves on the Superintendent Student Advisory Committee. She currently has the most Speech and Debate Honor points in the school, is a National Speech & Debate Association Academic All-American, and has placed at the national tournament for Speech, among other accomplishments.

## They Always Knew I Could Do This

Growing up, Arina always knew some sort of college experience would be in her future. "My parents left Romania and started completely over, just for a chance for me to have a better future," Arina shared. "My dad learned English at the age of 35, and so did my mom. My parents made a lot of sacrifices so I can be here today. They just wanted me to go to college; they had no expectations beyond that. They always knew I could do this."



**My parents made a lot of sacrifices so I can be here today. They just wanted me to go to college; they had no expectations beyond that. They always knew I could do this."**

Arina applied for the QuestBridge scholarship at the recommendation of Speech and Debate Coach Ben Geiger. "QuestBridge is a highly competitive program that is looking for students that truly have a need and the aptitude to be



successful in rigorous post-secondary institutions," shared Ben. "In 10 years of working with QuestBridge while teaching in Arizona and Minnesota, Arina is the second student I know who has been selected."

Out of over 20,800 applicants, QuestBridge selected 6,683 finalists to be considered for the scholarship and matched 2,242 finalists with partner colleges. Arina was matched with the University of Pennsylvania and will head there in the fall of 2024.

## I Just Want to Help People

At the University of Pennsylvania, Arina plans to study cognitive science. "I have a strong passion for psychology and neuroscience," Arina shared. "I find it fascinating how one event in childhood can shape and impact your brain." Career-wise, she hopes to be a pediatric neuropsychologist in hospitals. "I'm hoping to bring new therapies to certain neurological conditions. I just want to help people. It brings me a sense of fulfillment when I brighten someone's day, to make their life a little easier."

**CONGRATULATIONS, ARINA!**  
**We wish you the best and look forward to watching you grow in your post-secondary education and career!**



# Warrior Spotlight

## Sam Bivens

Teacher at Pilot Knob STEM Magnet School

Meet Sam Bivens, a fourth-grade teacher at Pilot Knob STEM Magnet School! Inspired early in his career while working in a mentorship program, Sam's love of teaching led him to School District 197, where he began as a paraprofessional for the Two Rivers REAL Program. Now in his seventh year with the District, Sam is inspiring students as a teacher at Pilot Knob. Get to know Sam in the interview below.



**Q What has been your biggest surprise working at an elementary school?**

**A** Younger students require more attention, and they know more than you think.

**Q What do you love most about the Pilot Knob school community?**

**A** We have a great principal, the teachers are friendly and helpful, and the students are full of energy and joy. It's never a boring day!

**Q What do you hope to instill in your students before they head off to middle school?**

**A** I hope to instill respect, honesty, empathy, and kindness. Next year, they will be around different kids they have yet to go to school with. And those are good skills to have going into middle school. Also, they need organization skills because they will have multiple teachers, and they can benefit from organizing assignments and time management.

**Q What is your favorite subject matter to teach?**

**A** My favorite subject to teach is math. I enjoy the challenge of the subject personally and how I can bring it across to others. I like the creativity involved in teaching math. And the enjoyment I get seeing students succeed.

**Q What's a fun fact about you that may surprise your students?**

**A** I can spin a basketball on my finger!

Tom Benson, Principal at Pilot Knob, shares that Sam brings passion to teaching and a positive attitude to the classroom every day. "Sam cares deeply about his students and enjoys getting to know them," Tom shared. "Sam also brings a love of sports! Especially for the Vikings and Timberwolves. **It's fun to see him find ways to connect with every student.**"

# Charting Progress: Our Strategic Framework Journey

Learning and growing are central to our work in School District 197. For this reason, we frequently ask, “Why do we do the things we do in our schools?” Our Strategic Framework helps answer that question.

With guidance from the Strategic Framework planning committee and community feedback, we created a new Strategic Framework in 2019. With nearly four years of our Strategic Framework in place, we’re taking a closer look at the journey—the process, our goals, and our current work.

## Why develop a Strategic Framework?

In School District 197, our Strategic Framework provides an organized approach to achieving educational goals and supporting student learning and development. It aligns District operations with community values, and helps us create clear expectations for our schools and administration.

## How was the Strategic Framework developed?

In the fall of 2019, we hosted community-wide sessions to gather input into creating a revised strategic plan. Hundreds of community members, students, and staff discussed what students need to learn to prepare for their future, what they value about our schools, and what new opportunities the District should explore. A representative group from the school community met to discuss the input and create a new Strategic Framework. The school board approved the framework in June 2020 and implemented it during the 2020-21 school year.

## What was created?

The strategic planning work resulted in developing one mission statement, belief statements, a list of goals, and focus areas that identify what the District will focus on to help accomplish our goals. Our focus areas may change as our work and school community evolves.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

*Nurture. Inspire. Prepare. Together, We Thrive.*

School District 197 is committed to caring relationships, equitable practices, and high achievement for all.

### GOALS

All students are academically and socially ready for school.

All 3rd graders can read at grade level.

All racial and economic achievement gaps are closed.

All students graduate from high school.

All students are ready for career and college.

### WE BELIEVE...

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- People thrive when they feel connected, trusted, and affirmed.
- Communication and collaboration strengthen school, family, and community relationships.

#### EQUITY

- Our diversity makes us stronger.
- Seeking to understand each other strengthens the individual and community.
- We are all accountable for removing barriers and creating equitable systems.

#### ACHIEVEMENT

- High expectations and personalized support are critical for student success.
- Innovative environments promote curiosity, creativity, and courageous action.
- Everyone has the ability to continually grow.

### FOCUS AREAS

1

Establish a district-wide system of social-emotional learning and support

2

Build equitable systems and support throughout the district

3

Increase E-12 opportunities for career exploration and preparation

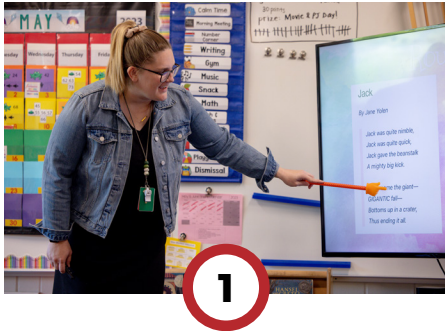
## How does the Strategic Framework work?

Each year, we determine the specific strategies the District needs to implement to move us toward our desired improvements. These strategies, which we call “implementation targets,” are described in more detail in our annual reports, and some are highlighted in this newsletter.



# Strategic Framework in Action

The three focus areas of the Strategic Framework identify the areas in which we want to target our improvement efforts to live out our mission and achieve our goals.



1

## Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (or SEL) is the process of people learning and applying the skills to manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. In School District 197, SEL looks like:

- **Explicit SEL Instruction:** Providing students with opportunities to practice social and emotional skills in developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive ways.
- **Integrated SEL with Academic Instruction:** Integrating SEL objectives into instructional content and teaching strategies.
- **Supportive School and Classroom Climates:** Creating supportive and culturally affirming schoolwide and classroom learning environments.
- **Focus on Adult SEL:** Providing staff with regular opportunities to cultivate their social, emotional, and cultural skills, collaborate, and build trusting relationships.
- **Authentic Family Partnerships:** Providing families and school staff with meaningful opportunities to build relationships and collaborate to support student development.



2

## Equitable Systems and Supports

We're committed to equitable opportunities and outcomes for all members of our school community. Educational equity benefits everyone and prepares all students to thrive in a diverse local, national, and global community. In August 2023, the school board adopted an equity policy (Policy 106). Some of the commitment areas are described below.

- **Diverse Classrooms and Schools:** Developing systems that remove barriers and reduce disparities in participation in educational programs and extracurricular activities.
- **Teacher and Leader Quality and Diversity:** Recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse, culturally responsive workforce that reflects our student demographics.
- **Equitable Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** Prioritizing culturally relevant curriculum, equitable decision-making rubrics, and inclusive instructional practices.
- **Equitable Student Leadership and Voice:** Seeking to gather and understand student perspectives in decision-making processes.
- **Equitable Family and Community Partnerships:** Building linguistic and cultural bridges between the District and our diverse communities and seeking representation reflective of student demographics on District advisory committees.



3

## College and Career Readiness

Over the last decade, we've worked to expand our high school offerings, organize courses by career fields, and show the alignment to career pathways. As we continue work in this area, we aim to expose students in early learning through middle school to various careers and pathways to reach their dreams. Some of the ways we're doing that are:

- **Course, School and Structural Support:** Reducing barriers to improve student outcomes for underrepresented groups.
- **Direct Student Supports:** Enhance support for students in AP courses and review transition procedures across educational levels.
- **Career and College Readiness:** Expanding student opportunities to earn college credit, career-based certifications, and internships.
- **Career and Technical Education Pathways:** Aligning and expanding opportunities for students to explore Career and Technical Education (CTE).

## Ways We Measure Performance

Every fall, we publish an annual report that shows progress of our strategic goals. The report identifies performance measures and the degree to which the District is progressing toward those outcomes. The report is available on the District website—click the QR code to view.



# School Board Members Reflect on the Strategic Framework

The School District 197 School Board is responsible for overseeing and setting the District's strategic direction. We asked them questions about the Strategic Framework—here's what they had to say.



Tim Aune



Marcus Hill



Sarah Larsen



Byron Schwab



Morgan Steele



Jon Vaupel



Randi Walz

## What are you most proud of in the Strategic Framework?

**SARAH LARSEN:** The Strategic Framework has remained very relevant over time, and we have seen a lot of change in our world since we developed it. The language we chose around relationships, equity, and achievement remains pivotal.

**MARCUS HILL:** Each of our District's schools has created innovative learning environments where our children thrive. Each school has set high expectations for our students and can meet their needs by leveraging our incredible teachers, staff, and community resources.

**MORGAN STEELE:** I am most proud of how our diversity continues to shine as our greatest strength in our schools and how it is consistently highlighted. Acknowledging the strengths that each individual brings with them and fostering those strengths in the community allows our students to thrive.

## What do you want the community to know about the Strategic Framework?

**RANDI WALZ:** It was developed and revised with substantial input, involvement, and time invested by the community. It was through this collaboration that the District's vision was established.

**BYRON SCHWAB:** The Strategic Framework guides, drives, and motivates all decisions that are made by the board. It gives the school board a stable and consistent direction, focus, and purpose.

**JON VAUPEL:** This framework and vision is meant to drive everyone's work, no matter their role or position in the District. Every decision the board makes has been in service of the Strategic Framework. It helps to ensure that we all are paddling in the same direction.

## How has the Strategic Framework impacted our schools?

**TIM AUNE:** I think our students are very much aware of the positive culture in our buildings. It is a culture that is welcoming and accepting, and one I think these same students know they need to continually promote and support.

**JON VAUPEL:** How prominently and consistently social-emotional learning is when our sites share their updates with the board—all the way from the Early Learning Center (serving children and their families starting at birth) to our Branch Out Transition Program (serving students up to 22 years of age).

**SARAH LARSEN:** Our three focus areas have really taken off since we established our Strategic Framework. I think the biggest impacts are those in area three—with greater opportunity for all students to explore and find rigor in their coursework that best suits them and allows them to thrive. The opportunities created in rigorous courses at the high school are remarkable, along with the new updates and changes to the middle school schedule. The possibilities for our students are endless!



## Nominations for the 2024 Warrior Hall of Fame are Open!

Nominations are open for the 2024 Warrior Hall of Fame through May 1, 2024. The Warrior Hall of Fame is a collection of former Warriors who have distinguished themselves in the area of athletics, activities, fine arts, academics, and service while at Henry Sibley/Two Rivers High School and beyond in their post-high school experiences. Nominations are open to anyone who has graduated from Henry Sibley/Two Rivers High School, currently works for or is retired from Henry Sibley/Two Rivers High School, or is a devoted community member supporter.



Click the QR code to learn more and fill out a nomination form. You can also email the activities office at [activities@isd197.org](mailto:activities@isd197.org) to request a paper submission form.

# Helping Eighth-Graders Prepare for Life at Two Rivers High School

**Bridging the gap between middle and high school can be a crucial step in preparing students for success. This year, we made significant changes to address this transition based on feedback from staff, students, and families who expressed the desire for more in-depth experiences during this pivotal period.**

## Connecting Courses to Careers

Based on our Strategic Framework's emphasis on making students "College and Career Ready," we wanted to illustrate how various careers tie to specific courses offered at Two Rivers, such as the culinary kitchen, wood workshop, video production, personal finance, world language programs, and music spaces. In previous years, we conducted brief presentations at each middle school, but this time, we opted for a full-day immersive experience at the high school for all district eighth graders.

## High School 101

The day-long event for eighth graders at Two Rivers included exploring elective course opportunities, touring the high school, and visiting the activity fair to learn about all the clubs, activities, and sports opportunities. Small groups, led by Two Rivers student leaders and staff, provided a personalized experience for the eighth graders. The day aimed to demystify the high school experience and help students understand the importance of academic planning.



**What surprised me the most about the tour was all the different classes I'm able to take."**

**Amaya**, Heritage E-STEM student

# Aligning Courses and Activities With Interests and Dreams

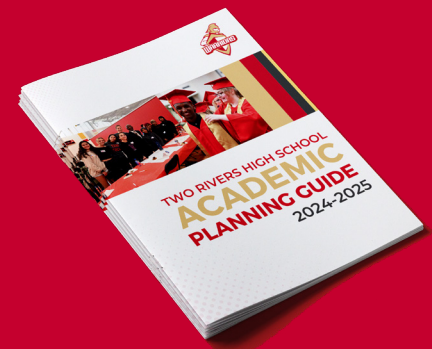


**A big part of the transition to ninth grade is the registration process—helping students find courses and activities that interest them. Dr. Jessica Cabak, Two Rivers Associate Principal, helped lead this year's transition and registration processes for the high school.**

A student's educational journey starts with the academic planning guide at Two Rivers High School. The academic planning guide helps students navigate the opportunities offered at Two Rivers and, with the help of their families and school counselors, find the courses and activities that best

match their interests and dreams. "When students look through the guide, we tell them to consider which courses and activities will best help them explore options for their future and prepare for post-secondary plans," shared Jessica. "We want students to find balance. We want them to challenge themselves and succeed academically while also being a part of one of many Two Rivers student activities."

The high school tour connected the students with core content teachers and students at the high school to learn about course options and expectations. "Being in the space makes it more real for students," shared Jessica. "Having students tour the high school while learning about their options helps them visualize themselves as a student here. We want students to feel comfortable in the space and be more at ease with their transition to high school."



**Interested in the courses and activities offered at Two Rivers High School? Check out the academic planning guide here:**





# Elevating Student Voice in Education

To meet the growing interest of students seeking involvement in decisions shaping their school experiences, we have reaffirmed our commitment to student voice and leadership. Recognizing that active student participation in educational decisions correlates with increased engagement and investment in learning, the school board embedded this commitment in its new Equity Policy, adopted in June, and the administration actively encourages students to express their perspectives through various initiatives.

To highlight the importance of student voice, we're turning to the real experts—two actively involved 11th graders in our student voice initiatives, Nawal Hassan and Raul Vaz.



## How do you define student voice?

**Nawal:** Giving students a real say in things at school. Not just listening but really hearing what students think and feel. It's not just about students following the rules; it's that they have a say in defining the rules. It's not just about books and tests; it's something students can be a part of.

**Raul:** Students giving feedback on what's going on in the classroom and what needs to change to make it a better place for everyone.

## How did you get involved in student voice initiatives?

**Nawal:** Principal Johnson first asked me to serve on the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC). At the EAC meetings, I started talking with Miles Lawson (the District's Secondary Curriculum and Gifted and Talented Coordinator), and he asked if I'd be interested in providing input on curriculum choices. Soon after, Miles and I teamed up to form the Student Curriculum Advisory Council, where a group of students provides input on new course additions, curriculum changes, and more.

**Raul:** I asked Principal Johnson how to get involved as a freshman. He shared opportunities and asked me to join EAC. From there, I made connections with folks in the District Office. I got involved in the Curriculum Advisory Council and work on smaller projects with administrators. I was also on the interview panel to hire the new Educational Equity Coordinator.

## What is the value—to students, the District, the community—of student voice in school districts?

**Nawal:** Student voice allows students to have a say in their environment—making them feel more connected and heard. Community-wise, it creates schools that reflect the needs and dreams of the people in it.

**Raul:** It makes school a better place. You're getting insights straight from the people who go to the school every day.

## What advice would you give to our school board and administrators to continue fostering more student voices in the District?

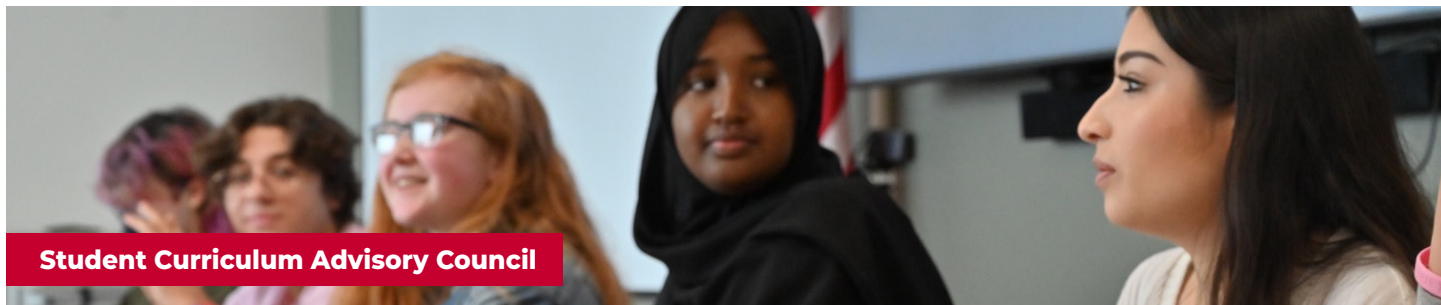
**Nawal:** Continue encouraging a culture of listening, taking students' voices and their advice seriously. Consider establishing more student councils or advisory groups. For each new big project or decision, there should be a student group to go along with it.

**Raul:** Don't be afraid to reach out to students and ask for them to participate. They can use it for college and help make change. Really listen. Sometimes feedback isn't possible, but you can at least have an open mind.



# Student Voice in Action

Here are a few ways we actively seek out student voice to inform our approaches and honor students' identities and experiences.



This student group collaborates with the District's curriculum team, meeting weekly to review, discuss, and provide feedback on instructional programming. One notable change the students have helped with is providing input into the course proposal processes at the high school and the new middle school schedule. "The students have insightful ideas about what kind of courses they would like to see, what kind of courses students will actually take, and how to advertise, market, and recruit for these courses," shared Miles Lawson. "Their feedback either reinforces that we are on the right path or helps us to see issues or barriers that we were not aware of and ideas for how to mitigate those issues or barriers."



New this school year, the Superintendent Student Advisory Council is a group of high school students who meet monthly with the Superintendent to identify ideas, issues, and solutions across the District. So far this year, they have discussed ways to improve communications with the student body, identified ways to help students identify their strengths and interests, and discussed ways to increase student engagement.

To ensure student voice is incorporated into the decision-making process at the school board level, we have two high school students serve as School Board Student Representatives each school year. Their primary roles are providing insight from a student lens and enhancing the Board's understanding of how students experience their education. This year's Student Representatives are LaRae Dodson and Sam Villa. LaRae shares that her ultimate goal is "to ensure that all of the student voices in the District are heard and seen by the people with the power to make change."



It's not just older students who are using their voices. Younger students at our middle and elementary schools use their voices through student councils, where students are empowered to make decisions and engage in issues important to the student body and school culture. New this year, Garlough Environmental Magnet School implemented a fourth-grade student council. They help kindergarteners on the first day of school, help with morning announcements, train other fourth-grade students, and participate in assemblies and school-wide incentive challenges.

# Our Comprehensive Approach to College and Career Readiness

In School District 197, we focus on providing various career-connected learning experiences that help students find their passions, sharpen their skills, and pave the way for brighter futures.

## Building Pathways to Success

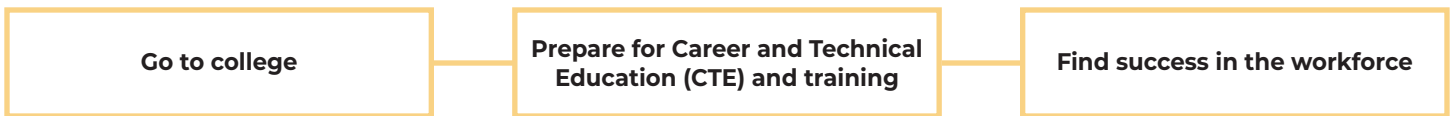
Our ongoing College and Career Readiness (CCR) efforts in grades 7 through 12 focus on building multiple pathways, complete with flexible on-ramps and off-ramps, to support students' educational journeys. With our new middle school schedule, we're expanding middle school elective offerings to nearly 20 courses—providing additional opportunities for students to explore their strengths and interests earlier.

At the high school level, we've broadened our course offerings to encompass 13 new classes this academic year, totaling nearly 175 options. Courses like Computer-Aided Drafting, AP Government and Politics, and Mass Media and Modern Culture diversify our curriculum to cater to students' interests and aspirations.

We're building pathways and providing resources in a supportive environment so that when students leave high school, they have at least three options they can pursue:

**↑35%**

**The number of Advanced Placement and Concurrent Enrollment courses offered at Two Rivers has increased nearly 35% in the last three years.**



## Here are a few ways we're helping students get career and college-ready:



### Concurrent Enrollment (CE)

Enables high school students to take college classes and get credit for both high school and college. At Two Rivers, we offer 15 CE courses; next year, we'll have nearly 20. Guitar Techniques, an elective in the Orchestra program, is one class where students can earn three college credits through Inver Hills Community College.



### Work-Based Learning

Helps students bridge the gap between what they learn in school and their paid work experience. The program is a revival of the original On-the-Job Training (OJT), which had declined significantly over the past two decades. Upon completion, students receive personalized career support and earn college credit at Dakota County Technical College.



### Workforce Credentials

Allows students to obtain industry credentials during the school day. At Two Rivers, an on-site Certified Nursing Assistant Program enables students to achieve full certification as entry-level nursing assistants in one semester. The course is concurrently enrolled with Inver Hills Community College, allowing students to earn five college credits.



**We're not trying to make students come to an answer of 'what do you want to be when you grow up.' We are trying to help students see opportunities that are potential next steps for them, and changes in direction can happen to any of them, which is why we want them to try new things while they are here with us. Trying it here is a low risk/high reward for them, with adults who know them, in a system they are familiar with, and without paying college tuition to try those new ideas out."**

**Miles Lawson**



# Teaching Social-Emotional Learning Skills

When you walk into any of our schools, you'll hear teachers greeting students as they arrive for the day. You'll see students raising their hands to talk, listening carefully to a teacher's instructions, and working with peers. All of these practices are social-emotional skills.

In School District 197, SEL helps students understand and manage their feelings, get along with others, and make good choices. According to Sara Lein, Director of Special Services, SEL is ingrained in everything we do. "It's how we present information in the classroom, how we allow students to think and work, and how we as adults work together to serve our students," she shared. "SEL is the base layer for teaching and learning."

## How Social-Emotional Skills are Taught

While SEL is taught and practiced at all our schools, the most direct and targeted SEL instruction happens at our elementary schools. At the elementary level, students develop their competence and confidence as learners, along with attitudes toward school, self, and peers.

At our elementary schools, school counselors meet weekly with every class to cover topics like bullying, online safety, and emotional management. Students learn and practice these essential skills that support emotional health, build empathy for their peers, and contribute to a positive school culture so all students can thrive.

## SEL Skills at a Glance

- Manage emotions and behaviors
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Recognize and regulate emotions
- Show care and concern for others
- Work cooperatively with others
- Maintain supportive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Set goals and a plan for success



## What SEL Looks Like in the Classroom

Mendota Elementary Counselor Brianna Lennox is teaching a lesson on conflict resolution for kindergarten through second-grade students. Students are learning how to use "I feel" statements while gaining strategies for age-appropriate conflicts, such as sharing playground equipment. They practice "small problem" solving and learn to apologize and talk about their differences.

Third and fourth-grade students are learning about the Zones of Regulation and the emotions that go with each Zone. "I have been teaching about different parts of our brains and how they respond to stress, and students seem to really be engaged," shared Brianna.



**These skills are important in school, but they're also important outside of school. Kids can apply these skills while on sports teams, on the school bus, in their community, and as they grow into adults in society."**

**Sara Lein**



Moreland Arts & Health Sciences Magnet School Counselor Steph Casmer says students are engaged and participate actively in her lessons. Students are excited to bring real-life examples and ask questions during each weekly visit with their school counselor. She also includes games and books in her weekly lessons.

"Students really enjoy when I have games that they get to play to reinforce my lessons," she shared. "Once I do the activity, they will ask if we can do it over and over again. In third and fourth grade, I bring in a few 'escape room' activities, which are also popular to complete."

For Sara Lein, SEL is about helping set kids up for success as they move on to middle and high school and become adults. "These skills are important in school, but they're also important outside of school. Kids can apply these skills while on sports teams, on the school bus, in their community, and as they grow into adults in society."



West St. Paul + Mendota Heights + Eagan Area

1897 Delaware Ave.  
Mendota Heights, MN 55118

[isd197.org](http://isd197.org)

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit No. 2015

# SUMMER ADVENTURES AWAIT!

## Now Hiring School-Age Care Summer Camp Support Staff

Join our School-Age Care (SAC) camp staff to help provide a fun environment for local students this summer. Summer camp includes weekly trips to the West St. Paul pool, walks to local parks, field trips, and a different adventure every day.

- ✓ Summer Position
- ✓ Flexible Days & Hours
- ✓ Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.



**QUESTIONS OR TO APPLY:**  
[lisa.grathen@isd197.org](mailto:lisa.grathen@isd197.org) | 651-403-8521

**APPLY ONLINE:** [isd197.org/work4sac](http://isd197.org/work4sac)