

April 9, 2025

2025-26 Superintendent's Budget Message

Dear Riverdale Budget Committee Members and Community,

As I enter my third year as superintendent at Riverdale School District, I can confidently say that we understand our budget's nuance and have corrected much historical inefficiency and lack of formality that had compounded over the past ten years. Unlike most of our area district counterparts, through prudence and early action, we have navigated to a position of relative stability with pending opportunities for increased revenue coupled with an ability to absorb variable costs.

As in previous years, the administrative team continues to review all aspects of operations to optimize expenditures and explore opportunities to leverage available revenue. This is an ongoing and necessary endeavor. While we anticipate needing to access some level of contingency for the 2025-26 school year to support upcoming negotiations, and despite the unexpected impact of higher PERS rates, our overall fiscal position remains conservative, allowing for revenue growth. It is important to note that without the intentional actions taken over the past two years, the PERS rate increase would have depleted our reserves and put us in a position of reductions. As a result, we will enter the 2025-26 school year with the Board-mandated 5% reserve intact and a projected beginning fund balance comparable to that of 2024-25. If realized, this would mark the first time in many years that the district has successfully aligned revenues and expenditures to achieve a balanced budget.

As we know, the Riverdale School District is most fortunate to draw upon a wide variety of unique revenue streams, allowing us to stand out as a premier institution. The Riverdale Foundation will augment the District's revenue by \$1.2M, 9.5% of our total general fund revenue. The local levy will bring another \$1.1M to supplement district services further. Tuition paid by students attending districts that don't release transfer students brings an additional \$1.2M in estimated revenue to Riverdale. Both schools' Parent/Teacher Clubs (PTC) recently raised considerable funds to upgrade technology across both buildings. Grants such as Title, High School Success, IDEA, and the Student Investment Act (SIA) further support the District's services offered to students. These many revenue sources augment the funds provided to the District from the State of Oregon's *State Schools Fund* each year.

Last year, Riverdale High School achieved the number #1 public high school in the state, while the District ranked #2. In addition to these accolades, the [Riverdale Annual](#) highlights many district accomplishments leading up to our District's current distinction and prominence. All of these acknowledgments have an impact on the budget. As a result of our hard work, there is an increase in the number of incoming 9th graders. If all things remain the same, this will mean revenue growth.

We recommend continuing to monitor and refine our educational service delivery model by focusing on expenditure efficiencies and leveraging revenue. This includes exploring the renewal of the PERS side account and considering a potential increase in the levy for the 2026-27 school year. From this stable and cautious fiscal foundation, we will build on successful marketing initiatives, particularly by leveraging the anticipated [adoption of the IB program at the high school](#) and its potential expansion at the grade school. Additionally, we recommend maintaining a fiscally conservative budgeting approach to hedge against anticipated volatility in the State School Fund and the pending 2025-27 licensed contract negotiations.

I want to thank our district office staff for their efforts in preparing the 2025/26 budget, especially the widespread support, infinite patience, and dedication of staff and the community while we work through challenges.

I also want to thank the School Board and the Budget Committee members for their volunteer service to help make Riverdale School District an exceptional academic institution.

Warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Chris Russo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Russo" clearly distinguishable.

Christopher Russo
Riverdale School District Superintendent