Minutes of School Council Meeting

River Ridge High School School Council

October 16th, 2026

Meeting Information

October 16th, 2026, 7:45am, A-10

Attendance

Members Present

Justin Sanderson, Stephanie Portman, Alan Johnson, Scott Steinbrenner, Nicole Balejcsik, Autumn Hamilton, Theresa Haywood, Savannah Holcomb, Matt Kling

Members Absent

Trisha Caputo

Visitors and Other Attendees

None

1. Call to Order

Justin Sanderson, 7:45am

2. Report of the Principal

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES OF A PRINCIPAL

(River Ridge High School)

SY2026-27

1. Instructional Leadership (Shared Vision of Teaching and Learning)
• **Vision for learning**: Sets clear academic goals aligned with student achievement. • **Curriculum knowledge**: Understands best practices and curriculum standards. • **Data-driven decisions**: Uses student performance data to improve instruction. • **Support for teachers**: Coaches and supports instructional improvement

2. School Climate (Environment Where All Stakeholders Thrive)
• **Creates a safe, inclusive environment**: Promotes emotional, physical, and psychological safety. • **Cultural responsiveness**: Respects diversity and fosters equity. • **Behavior support**: Encourages respectful student conduct and discipline systems. • **Celebrates success**: Recognizes achievements of students and staff regularly.

3. Planning and Assessment (Collect/Utilize Data for Decision-Making)
• **Continuous improvement**: Establishes systems for monitoring and adjusting strategies. • **Goal alignment**: Aligns plans with district, state, and federal expectations. • **Assessment alignment**: Ensuring assessments are aligned with the standards.

4. Organizational Management (Maximize Resources to Increase Efficiency)

- **Time and resource management**: Prioritizes tasks and allocates resources efficiently.
- **Facility oversight**: Maintains a clean, functional, and safe school environment.
- **System efficiency**: Streamlines school operations and minimizes disruptions.

5. Human Resources Management (Develops and Retains Quality Personnel)

- **Staff recruitment and retention**: Attracts and keeps high-quality staff.
- **Professional development**: Facilitates growth through training and mentorship.
- **Staff morale and culture**: Builds a positive and productive workplace.
- **Conflict resolution**: Addresses interpersonal issues constructively.

6. Teacher/Staff Evaluation (Consistent and Constructive Evaluations of Personnel)

- **Fair and consistent evaluations**: Uses clear, objective criteria.
- **Instructional feedback**: Provides timely, actionable feedback for improvement.
- **Growth-oriented**: Supports staff in creating and meeting professional growth goals.

7. Professionalism (Exemplary Standard for School and Community)

- **Ethical behavior**: Acts with integrity, fairness, and transparency.
- **Reflective practice**: Evaluates personal leadership and seeks improvement.
- **Policy adherence**: Follows local, state, and federal education laws.
- **Modeling lifelong learning**: Engages in continuous professional development.

8. Communication and Community Relations (Effectively Collaborates with All Stakeholders)

- **Clear and transparent communication**: Shares important information in a timely manner.
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Involves families, staff, and community in decision-making.
- **Visibility and accessibility**: Maintains a presence in school and community events.

Data Driven Reports

- Schoolwide assessment data continues to reflect positive progress. STAR screening assessments remain a valuable tool for monitoring student achievement and predicting academic performance.
- Support Staff Member of the Year: Autumn Hamilton, Instructional Lead Strategist (ILS), was recognized as the school's Support Staff Member of the Year.

- River Ridge High School operates with one of the smallest administrative teams in the district while maintaining a full calendar of school activities and events. Staff members, including Autumn Hamilton, Adrian Gibson, and Joe Mullinax, have taken on additional responsibilities to support school operations. Creative scheduling and collaboration continue to be essential to meeting school needs.

School Climate

- The principal shared positive observations regarding school culture and student engagement. A recent football game highlighted strong school spirit, with the drumline and student section demonstrating enthusiastic support.
- We are hosting Women in Sports Day at River Ridge High School and are exploring a similar plan to recognize a broader range of student activities, including band, chorus, orchestra, and color guard, in addition to athletics. Would like to invite other schools but may start with only RR to work out any potential barriers.
- Administration continues to address student behavior expectations, including cafeteria conduct and other common areas. Emphasis is being placed on reinforcing student responsibility, respectful behavior, and appropriate use of privileges.
- The school recognized and expressed appreciation for district bus drivers through refreshments and a planned appreciation meal on October 16. River Ridge continues to welcome drivers into the building during their routes. Improvements to the district's transportation facilities are also being explored.

Planning and Assessment

- **October 22, 2026:** ASVAB Assessment
- **October 28, 2026:** PSAT/SAT/NMSQT Testing Day

Facilities

- The school anticipates receiving a storage container from Arnold Mill Elementary School (AMES) to provide additional space for CYFA materials and trophies.
- Hudl cameras are planned for the football stadium and gymnasium to support athletic film review, performance analysis, and statistics.
- Additional school culture signage is planned for common areas, including building lobbies.
- The new crosswalk has been a positive addition to campus safety and accessibility. Administration continues to reinforce established student arrival and dismissal procedures to ensure the crosswalk is used appropriately.

Human Resources and Personnel

- Staff turnover remains low, and overall teacher morale and school climate appear positive.
- The principal recently requested feedback from the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), including department heads, regarding school culture and operations. Responses have been collected and will be reviewed to identify opportunities for continued improvement.
    - One area identified for clarification involves student attendance expectations surrounding unofficial senior skip days. Administration is working to establish consistent expectations and communication.
- Staff evaluation procedures were discussed, including the use of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for instructional staff and the applicable evaluation process for noninstructional personnel.
    - The district's overall evaluation performance was discussed in relation to the four point rating scale, with a rating of 3 representing proficient performance.
    - Discussion focused on strategies for moving from proficient to exemplary performance, particularly through meaningful student engagement and effective instructional practices.

    - Classroom observations emphasize student ownership of learning, including students' ability to articulate what they are learning and demonstrate active participation in instruction.
- The council discussed CCSD procedures related to personnel matters involving law enforcement or the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Depending on the circumstances, employees may be placed on paid administrative leave while matters are reviewed in accordance with district policies.
- The council also discussed an increase in DFCS referrals, with approximately 500 referrals reported in August 2026 compared to 150 in August 2025. The discussion emphasized the importance of mandated reporting, continued staff awareness of reporting responsibilities, and ensuring that concerns are addressed through appropriate procedures.
- Head Custodian Larry Roe was recognized for his outstanding service, dedication, and important role in supporting daily school operations and maintaining a positive campus environment.

Communication and Community Engagement

- The school's second fire drill and evacuation drill were completed successfully.
- The council discussed challenges related to the collection of student dues and opportunities to improve family participation.
- The importance of supporting school business sponsors was emphasized. Families and community members are encouraged to patronize sponsoring businesses to help sustain valuable community partnerships. Examples: Buffalos on Hwy 92, Culvers on Hwy 92, Sustos
- The council discussed the possibility of offering parent volunteer opportunities as an alternative or supplement to student dues. Further consideration may be needed regarding feasibility and implementation.

8. New Business

STAR Reports | Autumn Hamilton

- STAR assessment reports were distributed to families this week. Parents with questions are encouraged to contact their student's teacher or Autumn Hamilton.
- As the use of STAR reports is new, the school continues to explore ways to maximize the data to support student learning and instructional practices.
- School Council members expressed interest in receiving additional resources or a guide to better understand STAR assessment scores and how to interpret the reports.
- Principal Justin Sanderson discussed the distinction between teaching literature and teaching foundational reading skills. While high school English Language Arts (ELA) teachers traditionally focus on literature, the school is working to strengthen instructional practices that address students' reading development and literacy needs.

Freckle | Autumn Hamilton

- Freckle, a supplemental learning and instructional resource, has also been introduced this school year.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:44am

Next Meeting

November 13th at 7:45am in A-10

Minutes Prepared By

Savannah Holcomb

Approval of Minutes

[After approval, enter the date these minutes were approved by the River Ridge High School School Council.]