

Riverview Roots Elementary School
Phase II: New Charter Prospectus Application

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Phase II: New Charter School Application

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Organization leadership team and board members, including organization affiliation and position with proposed school.		
Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School
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Bart Kocha	IL Network of Charter Schools Board of Directors	Founder, Board Member
Molly Souza	District Nurse, Burlington Area School District; Pediatric Nurse, Children's Hospital	Founder, Health Services
Len Wardzala	Business Development Executive, Kimball Electronics; Lyons Biodiversity Project Founder	Board Member, Environmental Community Connections
Paige Carrivou	Speech Language Pathologist, Stacked Therapies Pediatric Services	Board Member
Jennifer Holle	Regional Coordinator of WI Safe and Healthy Schools	Possible Director of Student Services, SPED teacher, and/or School Counselor
Malorie Schmit	English Language Learner teacher, Burlington Area School District	Founding Teacher
Emily Battisti	4K teacher, Burlington Area School District	Founding Teacher
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Peter Smet	Retired Superintendent and Business Manager, Burlington Area School District	Advisory Board Member
Michael Kelly	Attorney, Lloyd Phenicie Lynch Kelly	Advisory Board Member

Opening year:	Fall 2027
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Grade levels to be served by the proposed school:	4K-5
Opening grades:	4K-3
Geographic location of the school:	Lyons, WI
Projected number of students to be served at capacity:	170
Does the school expect to contract with a charter management organization or educational management organization for school management or operation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, identify the charter management organization:

Authorization Status	
Does the applicant team have charter school applications under consideration by any other authorizer(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, complete the table below.	
Authorizer	
Application Due Date	
Status	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Riverview Roots Elementary School is a proposed public charter school serving 4K–5th grade in Lyons, Wisconsin, just outside Burlington. The school will open with grades 4K-3 and approximately 120 students with plans to grow to full elementary capacity, with approximately 170 students by year three.

Mission Statement – Rooted in the natural environment, strong community partnerships, and cultural responsiveness, Riverview Roots provides a student-centered and inclusive learning environment where all children thrive. Through hands-on exploration of the natural world, robust Spanish language instruction, and teaching practices that honor culture and foster belonging, we are committed to social justice, educational equity, and whole-child development. In partnership with families and community organizations, we prepare students to become engaged, empathetic, and empowered global citizens.

We seek to serve children of all abilities, races, cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and gender identities within Lyons and the surrounding communities of Southeastern Wisconsin.

Vision Statement – Our vision is to cultivate a generation of learners from our community who are curious, compassionate, and equipped to make a positive impact locally and globally.

Through an inclusive, enriching curriculum that integrates Spanish language learning, nature exploration, and cultural appreciation, we prepare students to thrive in an interconnected world—instilling enduring values of social justice, environmental stewardship, and global citizenship.

Educational Philosophy and Program Design

Riverview Roots blends nature-based learning, cultural and linguistic inclusion, and whole-child development into a unified instructional approach. Learning occurs indoors and outdoors, with the natural environment functioning as an extension of the classroom. Spanish instruction begins in 4K to leverage early-childhood language acquisition and promote cross-cultural understanding. Social-emotional learning and relationship-based teaching practices are embedded throughout the day to nurture resilience, empathy, and self-regulation.

Our three core pillars define what makes Riverview Roots distinct:

1. Nature as Classroom – Daily outdoor exploration, environmental stewardship projects, and place-based learning that connect students to local ecosystems.
2. Community and Culture – Spanish language learning and culturally responsive curriculum that reflect and celebrate the diversity of our region and our world.
3. Whole-Child Development – Low student-teacher ratios and intentional SEL practices that cultivate belonging, curiosity, and joy in learning.

Key features include:

- A nature-integrated learning environment on a 7.5-acre riverside campus
- Strong Spanish language instruction beginning in early childhood
- Community partnerships supporting conservation, arts, and wellness
- A cohesive school culture grounded in equity, inclusion, and restorative practices
- Opportunities for teachers to collaborate in a teacher-powered governance structure

Innovation and Equity

Riverview Roots increases educational equity by offering developmentally rich early-grade programming, low student–teacher ratios, and Spanish language classes beginning in 4K—opportunities not widely available in surrounding districts. The school’s model is grounded in demonstrated best practices: nature-based learning supported by research from the American Institutes for Research showing gains in engagement, achievement, and executive functioning; early world-language exposure supported by cognitive development research from Bialystok and the National Research Council, which identifies benefits for phonological awareness, cognitive flexibility, and cultural competence; and whole-child, SEL-embedded practices backed by major meta-analyses (Durlak et al., 2011) demonstrating improved academic and behavioral outcomes. The integration of place-based, project-based learning aligns with research from the Buck Institute and environmental education studies highlighting deeper learning and stronger community connection. Through these evidence-based approaches—combined with culturally

responsive pedagogy and conservation partnerships—Riverview Roots incubates innovative instructional models in Wisconsin and expands access to high-quality, research-supported practices for all students. These innovation and equity strategies respond directly to documented community priorities, with 81.1% of respondents expressing excitement for nature-based learning, 83.8% for hands-on instruction, and 75.7% prioritizing social-emotional learning in the Riverview Roots Community Needs Assessment.

Section I: COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

1.01 Community Support, Input, and Feedback

Riverview Roots Elementary has been shaped through extensive engagement with families, educators, and community members across Lyons, Burlington, and nearby communities. From the outset, the founding team committed to a listen-first approach, ensuring the school’s mission, instructional priorities, and culture reflect authentic community needs.

A bilingual Community Needs Assessment launched in Spring 2025 initially yielded 66 respondents and continued to receive additional responses as outreach expanded. To date, the survey includes input from 74 community members, representing families of at least 43 age-eligible children. Across responses, families consistently identified the following priorities:

- nature-based, outdoor learning
- smaller class sizes and individualized instruction
- early Spanish language classes
- a trauma-informed, relationship-centered culture
- hands-on, project-based learning connected to community
- more inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms

Families also expressed a strong desire to restore a local elementary school option following the closure of Lyons Center Elementary, which enrolled approximately 160 students in grades 4K–5 prior to closing. Lyons itself, with a population of roughly 1,600 residents, maintains a substantial number of households with school-age children, reinforcing demand for a community-centered school located within the village.

To further validate and deepen the survey findings, Riverview Roots hosted an in-person Community Input Session in January 2025. Families participating in the session reviewed proposed academic programming, outdoor learning structures, and school culture priorities, and provided feedback through facilitated discussion and written responses. Feedback from the session strongly reinforced survey findings, with families expressing enthusiasm for a tuition-free, nature-integrated public school option and confidence that additional local families

would enroll if the school were available. Input from this session informed refinements to instructional design, scheduling, and family engagement structures.

In addition to the formal survey and community session, the founding team facilitated multiple listening sessions, small-group meetings, and one-on-one conversations with parents, bilingual families, early childhood providers, and local educators. These conversations resulted in concrete programmatic decisions, including:

- adoption of structured literacy and strong core math materials
- development of a school-wide “Nature as Classroom” model with daily outdoor learning
- refinement and strengthening of SEL and restorative practices
- integration of Spanish language instruction beginning in 4K
- schedule adjustments to support hands-on learning and exploration

Parents and caregivers have been deeply involved throughout the planning process by completing surveys, reviewing draft schedules, offering feedback on outdoor learning and Spanish programming, providing letters of support, and joining early interest and volunteer lists. Several founding team members are themselves local educators and parents of future students, ensuring that decisions are grounded in both professional expertise and lived family experience.

Looking ahead, Riverview Roots has scheduled several pre-planning year engagement activities designed to broaden and diversify participation, including:

- additional community engagement sessions at the Enlightened Living Center in Burlington
- drop-in family engagement events at the Burlington Public Library
- coffeehouse conversations at Chestnut & Pine
- community-building outreach events such as Trivia Nights at Low Daily Brewery
- tabling at community cultural events such as Juneteenth and Día de los Muertos celebrations
- information booths at the Burlington and Lake Geneva Farmers Markets
- door-to-door canvassing in Lyons to ensure equitable outreach

Feedback from each engagement activity is documented, reviewed by the founding team, and used to inform ongoing refinement of the school’s academic program, operational planning, and family engagement strategies. Engagement to date—and the comprehensive engagement planned during the pre-planning year—ensures Riverview Roots continues to be shaped by the community it is designed to serve.

1.02 Evidence of Demand

Rationale for Demand in the Proposed Location

Riverview Roots will serve families in Lyons, Burlington, and surrounding communities where enrollment of young children has remained steady while access to alternative public school models has not expanded.

At the same time, demand for alternative instructional models continues to outpace supply. For example, Cooper Elementary Montessori—BASD’s only alternative public option—has operated at full capacity for multiple years with an ongoing waitlist. Similarly, Humble Oak Outdoor Learning and Arts Collective, a nearby private nature-based learning center, has reported multi-year waitlists for both school-year and summer programming. The sustained demand for these programs demonstrates a consistent interest in experiential, student-centered learning environments that emphasize creativity, exploration, and the outdoors.

Riverview Roots Elementary will uniquely meet this demand by offering a tuition-free, public alternative that integrates nature-based learning and individualized instruction within a community school setting. Our model directly responds to the expressed preferences of local families who seek lower student-teacher ratios, greater emphasis on social-emotional development, and increased opportunities for hands-on learning—all priorities identified in our Community Needs Assessment, listening sessions, and individual conversations.

Evidence of Prospective and Committed Families

The Spring 2025 Community Needs Assessment provides strong and growing evidence of concrete family interest and engagement in Riverview Roots Elementary.

To date, 74 community members have completed the survey, representing families of at least 43 children within the target enrollment age range. Of these respondents, 72 out of 74 (over 97%) expressed interest in a new public school option in their community.

Family engagement extends beyond general interest. Over 60% of respondents voluntarily provided contact information to receive updates, participate in planning meetings, or assist with outreach efforts, and 43 families indicated a willingness to participate in focus groups or support outreach activities. Multiple families have also directly communicated intent to enroll their children once the school opens.

In addition, multiple families cited the financial inaccessibility of existing nature-based or private programs, reinforcing the need for a tuition-free public model offering hands-on, nature-integrated learning. Families who attended the January Community Input Session expressed strong enthusiasm for the proposed school and shared confidence that many additional local families would seek enrollment if the option were available. Taken together, these indicators suggest sustained community demand, and Riverview Roots anticipates meeting or exceeding its initial enrollment target of 120 students.

1.03 Community Partnerships

Riverview Roots Elementary is grounded in the belief that strong schools grow from strong partnerships. The founding team has initiated and continues to cultivate relationships with a variety of local organizations, including:

- Prairie Crossing Charter School (Illinois) – Providing mentorship, governance guidance, and support for sustainable outdoor learning practices.
- Kettle Moraine Land Trust (KMLT) and the Lyons Biodiversity Project – Supporting ecological fieldwork, habitat restoration projects, watershed education, and outdoor stewardship.
- Humble Oak Outdoor Learning & Arts Collective – Offering collaboration on professional development, nature-based learning strategies, and regional community events.
- Burlington Public Library – Partnering on literacy programming, family engagement events, and enrichment opportunities.
- Local farms and conservation groups – Supporting garden-based education, sustainability programming, and farm-to-school experiences.

Additionally, Riverview Roots is supported by the Wisconsin Independent Charter Schools Advocates (WICSA), which is serving as the school’s fiscal sponsor during the IRS 501(c)(3) approval process. WICSA also provides technical assistance and access to statewide charter expertise.

The founding team has engaged influential Wisconsin charter leaders—including Brittany Kinser, Jim Bender, Kristi Kole, Ralph Weber, and Robb Rauh—who have provided guidance on governance, advocacy, community engagement, and best practices for launching a high-quality charter school.

These partnerships are well aligned to the school’s mission and are likely to materialize due to shared values, strong early collaboration, and clear mutual benefit.

1.04 Family and Community Engagement: Pre-Planning Year and Beyond

Family and community involvement will continue to be a foundational pillar throughout the planning year and at every stage of the school’s future.

Pre-Planning Year Engagement

Key engagement activities scheduled for the planning year include:

- Formal Community Engagement Session on January 7 (with attendance added later).
- Engagement sessions at the Enlightened Living Center and Burlington Public Library.
- Coffeehouse conversations at Chestnut & Pine to foster informal dialogue.
- Community-building outreach, including hosting Trivia Nights at Low Daily Brewery.

- Information booths at the Burlington and Lake Geneva Farmers Markets.
- Door-to-door canvassing in Lyons to ensure equitable access to information.
- Family & Community Focus Groups advising on curriculum, culture, and family engagement practices.
- Founding Families Committee supporting outreach and school design.

Post-Opening Family and Community Engagement

Once operational, Riverview Roots will maintain and expand community involvement through multiple, ongoing structures that ensure authentic family partnership while preserving clear governance boundaries.

A Parent Advisory Council (PAC) will meet regularly with school leadership. The PAC will function as a school-based advisory body, providing structured opportunities for families to offer input on school culture, communication, family engagement, and program implementation. The PAC does not hold decision-making or governance authority; however, its feedback is regularly reviewed by the School Director and school leadership team and is used to inform continuous improvement.

In direct response to feedback gathered during community input sessions, Riverview Roots will establish robust volunteer programs that invite families and community members—including parents and grandparents of elementary-aged students—to be actively involved in the life of the school. Community members expressed strong interest in volunteering on a regular basis and in being welcomed into the school as partners in learning. Volunteer opportunities will support outdoor learning, garden education, fieldwork, classroom enrichment, and school events, allowing community members to contribute meaningfully while strengthening relationships and student engagement.

Riverview Roots will also incorporate community-based projects into the curriculum through local partnerships, reinforcing the school's place-based learning model.

The school will maintain transparent, two-way communication systems, including bilingual newsletters, surveys, open forums, and family–teacher partnership structures. Families will have opportunities to contribute perspectives and feedback that inform the school's teacher-powered instructional model and continuous improvement efforts, while governance, staffing, and policy decisions remain the responsibility of the School Director and Board of Directors.

This comprehensive engagement plan ensures Riverview Roots remains a responsive, community-anchored school where families and community members are welcomed as active partners in supporting student learning and school culture.

Section II: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PLAN

2.01 Enrollment Projections

The projected enrollment for Riverview Roots Elementary reflects a deliberate and measured growth plan aligned with regional demand, facility capacity, instructional model requirements, and financial sustainability. The school will open with grades 4K–3 and gradually expand to full elementary capacity by Year 3.

Grades	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
PreK	20	20	20	20	20
K	25	25	25	25	25
1	25	25	25	25	25
2	25	25	25	25	25
3	25	25	25	25	25
4		25	25	25	25
5			25	25	25
Total	120	145	170	170	170

Basis for Assumptions

These projections are grounded in:

- Market demand: A bilingual Community Needs Assessment showed 97% interest in a new public elementary school.
- Historical precedent: The former Lyons Center Elementary served ~160 4K–5 students when it closed in 2024, demonstrating a sustainable enrollment base in Lyons.
- Regional population trends: BASD and surrounding communities have stable early-childhood enrollment and growing interest in alternative instructional models.
- Comparable program waitlists: Cooper Elementary Montessori and Humble Oak Outdoor Learning & Arts Collective both operate at full capacity with multi-year waitlists, indicating unmet demand for experiential and nature-based options.
- Facility capacity: The Lyons Center building can comfortably support 170 students with dedicated nature-based learning spaces.
- Educational model: Small class sizes (≤ 25 students) align with the school's relationship-centered, nature-based learning model.

These data collectively support the reasonableness and viability of Riverview Roots' enrollment plan.

2.02 Achieving Racial and Ethnic Balance

Riverview Roots Elementary is committed to equitable access and inclusive enrollment practices that result in a student population reflective of the racial and ethnic diversity of the surrounding Burlington–Lyons region. In this context, *racial and ethnic balance* refers not to predetermined targets or quotas, but to ensuring that no group is excluded or underrepresented due to barriers related to language, access to information, transportation, or historical inequities.

According to recent DPI data, the regional elementary population is approximately:

- 1% African American
- 15% Hispanic
- 80% White
- 3% Multiracial
- 1% Asian

Historically, Lyons Center Elementary served a slightly higher proportion of Hispanic and Multiracial students than nearby district averages, reflecting the demographics of the Lyons community and surrounding rural areas. Riverview Roots anticipates serving a similarly diverse population and has intentionally designed outreach and engagement strategies to ensure families across racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds have equal opportunity to learn about and enroll in the school.

Strategies to Support Equitable and Inclusive Enrollment

Riverview Roots will implement inclusive, legally compliant strategies focused on removing barriers to access, including:

- Providing bilingual recruitment materials, enrollment forms, and family communications in English and Spanish.
- Conducting outreach through trusted, community-based locations such as early childhood centers, libraries, churches, farmers markets, and neighborhood organizations serving diverse families.
- Engaging in direct outreach and door-to-door canvassing in Lyons and Burlington to reach families who may have limited access to digital information or transportation.
- Hosting family engagement and information sessions at multiple locations across the community that are accessible by public transportation and familiar to families.
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable state and federal enrollment laws, including the use of a weighted lottery only if permitted and appropriate, to support equitable access.

Through these strategies, Riverview Roots seeks to create an enrollment process that is transparent, welcoming, and inclusive, resulting in a student population that reflects the community it serves and supports a school culture grounded in belonging, cultural responsiveness, and mutual respect.

2.03 Student Demographics and Rationale

Riverview Roots anticipates serving a student population that aligns with local demographic trends, including socioeconomic diversity and a proportion of multilingual learners and students with disabilities reflective of the Lyons/Burlington region.

Anticipated Student Demographic	
% Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch:	38%
% Student who are identified as English Learners:	9%
% Students with Disabilities:	17%
% African American:	1%
% Hispanic:	17%
% White:	76%
% Multiracial:	5%
% Asian:	1%

These projections align closely with DPI demographic data from the primary districts Riverview Roots is expected to serve—Burlington, Elkhorn, and Lake Geneva—while also reflecting the slightly higher racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity historically present at Lyons Center Elementary. The socioeconomic estimate mirrors the mixed-income neighborhoods in and around Lyons, where affordability, transportation access, and proximity to schools influence enrollment patterns.

The projected 17% of students with disabilities is consistent with regional trends and falls within the range of neighboring districts, whose special education identification rates average approximately 17% (Burlington 19.38%, Elkhorn 16.6%, Lake Geneva 15.53%). This projection is intentionally conservative and reflects a realistic expectation for a small, inclusive public elementary school serving a cross-section of the local community.

Riverview Roots does not seek to disproportionately enroll students with disabilities; rather, the school is designed to serve all learners well through strong Tier 1 instruction, early intervention, and inclusive practices. The school’s instructional model—grounded in structured literacy, integrated social-emotional learning, and hands-on, nature-based experiences—supports a wide range of learners and aligns with evidence-based practices commonly used in general education settings across the region.

By projecting a special education enrollment rate that closely mirrors surrounding districts, Riverview Roots demonstrates both fiscal prudence and programmatic readiness, ensuring the school is appropriately staffed and resourced to meet student needs without over- or under-estimating service demands. This approach supports stable planning, compliance with IDEA requirements, and equitable access to high-quality instruction for all students.

2.04 Student Recruitment Plan

Riverview Roots will implement a comprehensive and equitable recruitment strategy to ensure

that all families—especially historically underserved or geographically isolated ones—have access to the enrollment process.

Recruitment Activities

Planned and ongoing recruitment activities include:

- Bilingual recruitment materials and enrollment forms available in both English and Spanish, with additional languages available upon request, to ensure equitable access for all families.
- Community engagement sessions at accessible locations such as the Enlightened Living Center and the Burlington and Lake Geneva Public Libraries.
- Coffeehouse conversations at The Coffeehouse at Chestnut & Pine, offering informal opportunities to build personal relationships with families.
- Booths at the Burlington and Lake Geneva Farmers Markets during spring and summer, enabling outreach to diverse families and rural communities.
- Tabling at community cultural events, including Latin Night and Burlington’s Juneteenth Celebration at Low Daily Brewery, to increase visibility and connect with families in welcoming, community-centered spaces.
- Door-to-door canvassing in Lyons, Burlington, and Lake Geneva to reach families who may not attend public events or may prefer individualized outreach.
- Partnership-based outreach through early learning centers, churches, community organizations, and local businesses that serve families with young children.
- Digital communication efforts, including social media campaigns, email newsletters, and a user-friendly website that provides updates, event invitations, and enrollment information.
- “Experience Riverview Roots” family events, offering children hands-on outdoor activities while parents learn about the school’s mission, model, and enrollment process.

Equity and Accessibility

- Riverview Roots will actively reduce barriers to enrollment and participation by providing hands-on family support throughout the application and enrollment process. This includes in-person assistance with enrollment forms, support navigating transportation options, and access to translation and interpretation services as needed. Enrollment support will be available during community information sessions, scheduled family meetings, and through direct staff outreach, ensuring families with language, transportation, or technology barriers can fully access the school.
- If applications exceed available seats, Riverview Roots will use a weighted lottery when permitted by law to support equitable access.

This recruitment strategy demonstrates a clear, actionable plan aligned with the school’s mission and demographic goals.

2.05 Alignment Between Enrollment Projections, Educational Model, and Financial Viability

Riverview Roots’ enrollment projections are intentionally designed to support its core educational commitments—small, relationship-centered classrooms; nature-integrated instruction; and a strong SEL foundation—while ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Alignment with Educational Model

- Class sizes of 20–25 students support individualized attention, outdoor exploration, and project-based learning.
- The gradual expansion to 170 students by Year 3 ensures staffing can scale strategically without compromising program quality.
- The school’s outdoor and experiential learning model requires predictable teacher-student ratios to maintain safety and consistency.

Alignment with Financial Sustainability

- Enrollment projections align with conservative per-pupil state revenue estimates.
- The projected student count supports stable staffing, professional development, facility costs, and materials while maintaining a balanced budget.
- Year 3 stabilization at 170 students ensures the school reaches an efficient scale while preserving its small-school identity.

Riverview Roots’ enrollment plan is realistic, mission-aligned, financially sound, and supported by strong evidence of community demand.

Section III: SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

3.01 School Culture

Riverview Roots Elementary will cultivate a warm, inclusive, and relationship-centered school culture grounded in connection—to self, to others, and to the natural world. The envisioned culture is one where every child feels a deep sense of belonging and where curiosity, joy, and purposeful learning shape the daily experience. Students are encouraged to take intellectual risks, ask questions, engage in exploration, and learn from mistakes in an environment that prioritizes growth over perfection.

This culture will be established through:

- Daily relationship-based routines, including morning meetings, shared reflection, gratitude practice, and check-ins.
- Consistent SEL frameworks, integrating Responsive Classroom practices, restorative conversations, and emotional regulation strategies.
- Outdoor learning and stewardship, reinforcing care for self, community, and the environment.
- Small class sizes and looping where possible, enabling teachers to know each child deeply.
- Shared rituals and traditions—such as seasonal celebrations, community service days, and weekly gatherings—that strengthen community identity and joy.

Through connection, wonder, and shared responsibility, Riverview Roots will be a place where children thrive as confident, compassionate, joyful learners.

3.02 Mission/Vision and Core Values Within the School Culture

Riverview Roots' mission—to nurture curiosity, confidence, and connection through hands-on, nature-integrated learning—will be visible in every aspect of school life. The core values of *respect, responsibility, empathy, wonder, and joy* will shape interactions, decisions, and expectations for all members of the school community.

Core Values in Practice

- Respect – Practiced through care for the environment, our school and one another, listening to diverse perspectives, and maintaining inclusive, identity-affirming school spaces.
- Responsibility – Emphasized through shared stewardship of indoor and outdoor learning environments, community service, experiential outdoor projects, leadership development, and collaborative problem-solving
- Empathy – Cultivated through restorative practices, reflective dialogue, and opportunities to understand and support one another..
- Wonder – Embedded through inquiry-based learning, place-based exploration, creativity, and time in the natural world.
- Joy – Celebrated through daily moments of connection, shared successes, gratitude, humor, and hands-on discovery.

Daily routines—morning meetings, outdoor learning blocks, closing circles, and meaningful school traditions—ensure these values become lived experiences rather than abstract statements.

3.03 School Culture Development

The culture of Riverview Roots is intentionally co-created, not imposed. School leaders, teachers, staff, students, and families each play an active role in shaping and sustaining a positive, inclusive climate.

Leaders & Teachers

- Collaborate through a Teacher Leadership Council to develop shared rituals, norms, and culture-building practices.
- Participate in ongoing professional learning on SEL, trauma-informed practices, restorative approaches, and outdoor education.
- Model core values through communication, collaboration, and reflective practice.

Students

- Engage in class meetings, community circles, and leadership roles that promote agency and shared responsibility.
- Co-design class norms, stewardship routines, and community projects.
- Offer input through surveys, reflection journals, and feedback sessions.

Families & Community

- Participate in the Parent Advisory Council, volunteer opportunities, family events, and school traditions.
- Contribute feedback through listening sessions, surveys, and culturally responsive engagement activities.

These collective efforts ensure that the school's culture remains dynamic, inclusive, and filled with shared joy, evolving as the school community grows.

3.04 On Boarding New Students

Riverview Roots uses a thoughtful, relationship-based onboarding process for new students to ensure each child feels welcomed, supported, and connected from their first day. New families meet with the school director and classroom teacher to learn about the school's mission, routines, and expectations.

Mid-Year Onboarding System

- Welcome Meeting: New families meet with the principal and classroom teacher to learn about routines, expectations, and school values.
- Personalized Introduction: Teachers introduce the new student to peers, explain daily schedules, and review tools such as morning meeting rituals, outdoor procedures, and SEL routines.

- Peer Buddy System: Each new student is paired with a trained peer buddy who helps them navigate routines, join play and learning activities, and build social connections.
- Transition Monitoring: Teachers conduct scheduled check-ins (day 1, week 1, week 4) to assess academic needs, social-emotional adjustment, and family questions.
- Family Connection: Families are personally invited to upcoming community events, outdoor learning days, or family nights to strengthen their connection to the school community and sense of belonging.

This approach ensures new students integrate smoothly into both the academic and relational fabric of the school.

3.05 Disengaged Students

Riverview Roots implements proactive, multi-leveled systems of support, to identify and support students who may be showing early signs of academic, social or emotional disengagement using multiple data sources.

Systems to Identify Disengagement:

- Daily classroom observations of participation, motivation, peer interactions, and emotional regulation.
- Attendance monitoring with prompt follow-up on patterns of absence or tardiness.
- Academic data checks through formative assessments, running records, and learning conferences.
- Regular Student Support Team (SST) review, where school staff collaborate to analyze data and concerns and determine next steps.

Students identified as showing early signs of disengagement will receive targeted supports such as:

- Restorative conversations to repair relationships and rebuild connections.
- Check-in/check-out systems for students who benefit from structured adult support.
- Adult and peer mentorship opportunities to strengthen social belonging.
- Outdoor learning interventions, which provide regulation, confidence-building, and hands-on engagement.
- Short-term small-group instruction to reduce frustration and restore academic momentum.
- Integrated SEL supports such as mindfulness, emotional labeling, and coping strategies.

The goal is always reconnection—not punishment—helping students rediscover engagement through belonging, competence, and meaningful learning experiences.

3.06 Typical Day at Riverview Roots

A typical instructional day at Riverview Roots Elementary is intentionally structured, student-centered, and grounded in strong academics, joyful community connection, and culturally responsive practice.

Each morning begins with a classroom morning meeting in which students and staff gather to build relationships, practice gratitude, set intentions for the day, and reinforce shared values of respect, responsibility, empathy, wonder, and joy. Morning meetings intentionally honor students' identities and lived experiences by providing space for student voice, culturally affirming dialogue, and shared community norms that reflect the diversity of the classroom. This consistent routine establishes a sense of belonging, emotional safety, and readiness for learning.

Following the morning meeting, teachers deliver core academic instruction aligned to Wisconsin Academic Standards. Literacy and mathematics instruction occur daily and include a balance of whole-group lessons, targeted small-group instruction, and independent or partner practice. Instruction is culturally responsive and inclusive, incorporating diverse texts, examples, and perspectives that reflect students' backgrounds and experiences. Teachers use data-informed grouping and flexible instructional strategies to differentiate instruction and meet the diverse academic and linguistic needs of all learners.

Science and social studies are taught through integrated, hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom instruction to real-world and community-based contexts. Whenever possible, learning extends beyond the classroom through structured outdoor lessons, nature observation, and stewardship activities that honor local knowledge, place-based history, and multiple ways of knowing. Teachers intentionally plan outdoor learning to deepen conceptual understanding, support inquiry, and foster environmental literacy while maintaining clear learning objectives and academic rigor.

Throughout the day, teachers facilitate small-group instruction, hands-on investigations, and guided inquiry, allowing students to apply skills, ask questions, collaborate with peers, and demonstrate learning in multiple ways. Instructional strategies emphasize engagement, curiosity, and critical thinking while remaining aligned with evidence-based practices and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Students are encouraged to draw on their cultural knowledge, language assets, and lived experiences as part of the learning process.

Students also participate in specialty and enrichment classes, such as music, physical education, and Spanish language instruction. These experiences complement core academics and support creativity, physical well-being, multilingual development, and cultural awareness. Spanish instruction in particular affirms linguistic diversity and supports cross-cultural understanding for all students.

Reflection and goal-setting are intentionally embedded into the day. Teachers guide students in reviewing progress, celebrating growth, and reflecting on both academic learning and personal responsibility. Reflection practices are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive, helping students build metacognition, self-regulation, and ownership of learning in ways that honor individual strengths and perspectives.

Teachers engage in collaborative planning and professional learning time to analyze student data, refine instruction, coordinate interdisciplinary projects, and ensure alignment with the school's mission and instructional priorities. Collaboration includes attention to culturally responsive teaching practices, equity of access, and inclusive instructional design, strengthening consistency and quality across classrooms.

Each day concludes with reflection and closure, reinforcing community connection and appreciation for diverse contributions while preparing students to transition confidently to the next day. Through this balanced and intentional structure, Riverview Roots teachers create learning experiences that are academically rigorous, culturally responsive, inclusive, and deeply connected to students, place, and purpose.

Section IV: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLAN

4.01 Educational Program Plan Overview

Riverview Roots Elementary offers a hands-on, student-centered learning environment that balances whole-class instruction, small-group learning, and outdoor experiential education. The learning environment is intentionally designed to reflect the school's mission—connecting children to nature, community, and culture through active engagement and curiosity-driven exploration.

Riverview Roots will serve only the elementary division (4K–5) during this charter term; no middle or high school grades are planned.

Instruction occurs in flexible indoor classrooms and outdoor learning environments, including gardens, trails, and community green spaces. Teachers use projects and hands-on learning to integrate literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies into meaningful, real-world experiences.

- **Class Size and Structure:** Each class will serve up to 25 students with a licensed lead teacher and access to shared support staff and specialists (e.g., special education, Spanish, and outdoor education). This structure supports strong relationships, differentiation, and responsiveness to diverse learners.
- **Elementary Division (4K–5):** The school will open serving grades 4K–3, expanding through grade 5 by year three. Learning will be organized around multi-sensory,

interdisciplinary experiences that promote inquiry, creativity, and reflection. Younger grades will emphasize play-based learning and language-rich environment, while upper grades will deepen project-based study, leadership, and environmental stewardship.

- **Learning Model:**
 - **Whole-Class Instruction:** Used to introduce new concepts, build shared understanding, and create a sense of classroom community.
 - **Small-Group and Individualized Learning:** Supports differentiation, guided reading, Tier 2 interventions, and targeted skill development.
 - **Outdoor Experiential Learning:** Provides hands-on, place-based experiences that connect academics to environmental systems and community contexts.
 - **Independent and Reflective Learning:** Encourages self-direction, journaling, and goal-setting to promote metacognition and ownership of learning.

Environmental Education Structure

Environmental education is a core programmatic pillar, not an enrichment. Students engage daily with the natural world through:

- Observation and nature journaling
- Investigation of local habitats
- Seasonal investigations tied to elevateScience units
- Stewardship projects with community partners

Research indicates nature-based learning increases student engagement, improves executive functioning, and enhances academic outcomes (American Institutes for Research, 2005; Chawla, 2015).

4.02 School Calendar and Schedule

Riverview Roots Elementary operates on a 180-day academic calendar. The school day runs 8:05 a.m.–3:35 p.m., providing approximately 2,175 instructional minutes per week.

The calendar and schedule are designed to support academic rigor, physical movement, emotional regulation, and outdoor learning—particularly important for the anticipated student population.

Instructional Hours

Subject Area	Minutes Per Day	Approximate Minutes Per Week
Literacy (Reading, Writing,	120	600

Phonics, Word Study)		
Mathematics	80	400
Science and Social Studies	40	200
Spanish Language Instruction (3x per week)	30	90
Music (2x per week)	30	60
Social Emotional Learning and Classroom Meetings	40	200
Outdoor Education and P.E.	30	150
Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention	25	125
Health/SEL/Library and Technology/iReady Learning Plans	30	150
Art	Embedded in core curriculum	
Environmental Education and Outdoor Learning	Embedded throughout	
Recess and Unstructured Outdoor Play	40	200

Several subject areas—including environmental education, SEL, and outdoor learning—are embedded across core instructional blocks and are not additive to total instructional minutes.

Schedule Design and Rationale

The schedule supports:

- Extended blocks for structured literacy and inquiry-based science
- Daily outdoor engagement for regulation and focus
- Embedded SEL for emotional development
- Frequent movement to improve attention and learning (CDC, 2019)

4.03 Educational Program and Selected Instructional Materials

Riverview Roots uses an integrated, research-based curriculum aligned with Wisconsin State Standards and designed to address community-identified needs: strong early literacy, hands-on math and science, Spanish exposure, outdoor learning, and trauma-informed culture.

English Language Arts

Riverview Roots uses *Into Reading – Structured Literacy* as the Tier 1 core ELA curriculum for all students. The program provides explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Its design aligns with the Science of Reading and supports diverse learners through structured routines, knowledge-building texts, and genre-based writing.

Riverview Roots will use UFLI Foundations as a Tier 2 intervention resource, providing intensive foundational skill support for students identified through screening (DIBELS/Acadience) or progress monitoring. UFLI lessons offer explicit phonemic awareness instruction, multisensory routines, cumulative skill practice, decoding and encoding support, and dyslexia-friendly structured routines (Moats, 2020).

Using UFLI only in Tier 2 preserves coherence of Tier 1 instruction while ensuring clear, data-driven intervention pathways.

Together, Into Reading (Tier 1) and UFLI (Tier 2) create a strong, equitable literacy system aligned with Wisconsin ELA Standards and the Science of Reading.

Mathematics

Mathematics instruction will use Bridges in Mathematics (Math Learning Center) as the school's core program. Bridges offers a rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum that emphasizes conceptual understanding, visual models, and problem-solving strategies. Lessons engage students in reasoning, communication, and collaboration through hands-on manipulatives and real-world contexts that make mathematics meaningful and accessible to all learners. Conceptual math instruction improves retention and transfer (NCTM, 2014).

Teachers integrate environmental and community-based applications— Outdoor math (measurement, data collection, geometry in nature) strengthens relevance and engagement.

Science and Environmental Education

Riverview Roots will implement Savvas elevateScience as its core K–5 science curriculum. elevateScience provides NGSS-aligned, inquiry-based instruction through phenomena-driven units that emphasize investigation, modeling, and evidence-based reasoning (NGSS Lead States, 2013). This ensures students receive rigorous, standards-aligned science instruction and develop strong scientific practices.

Environmental Education & Sustainability

Environmental education at Riverview Roots is intentionally designed to complement core science instruction and is aligned to the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS). The school integrates environmental literacy across grade levels through interdisciplinary, place-based, and outdoor learning experiences that build understanding of environmental systems, inquiry skills, and civic responsibility.

To support implementation of the ELS standards and provide high-quality, hands-on learning experiences, Riverview Roots will utilize Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction–supported environmental education programs, including:

- Project Learning Tree (PLT): Used as a supplemental, interdisciplinary framework to extend learning through outdoor inquiry, environmental systems study, and stewardship projects.
- KEEP (Wisconsin K–12 Energy Education Program): Integrated into science and mathematics instruction to build understanding of energy systems, conservation, and sustainability.
- LEAF (Wisconsin Forestry Education Program): Embedded within science and environmental studies to support learning about forests, ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainable land use.

Regular outdoor and environmental learning experiences support student engagement, executive functioning, and academic achievement (American Institutes for Research, 2005). This intentional integration ensures students develop environmental literacy alongside strong academic foundations and fosters a lifelong connection to the natural world.

Social Studies: Place-Based, Integrated Instruction

Aligned with Wisconsin Social Studies Standards, units integrate:

- civics
- geography
- history
- economics

Students explore community systems, cultural richness, and environmental interdependence through local investigations and service learning.

Spanish Language Instruction

Riverview Roots Elementary provides 30 minutes of Spanish language instruction three times per week for all students in grades 4K–5 utilizing the Elementary School Wide Language Program model. Instruction emphasizes communication, cultural appreciation, and real-world application through songs, stories, games, and conversational practice. The curriculum integrates

vocabulary and themes that connect to students' daily experiences and outdoor learning—such as weather, animals, ecosystems, and community life.

Spanish classes follow the Wisconsin World Language Standards and focus on:

- conversational skills
- listening comprehension
- cultural appreciation
- vocabulary tied to daily life and nature

Spanish is delivered as a world language program and does not replace English core instruction or constitute bilingual education. Early language exposure supports cognitive flexibility and cultural competence (Bialystok, 2009).

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Trauma-Informed Practices

Riverview Roots Elementary is committed to nurturing the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is intentionally woven throughout the school day to build self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and strong interpersonal relationships. Teachers use evidence-based frameworks such as Responsive Classroom and the CASEL SEL competencies, aligned with Wisconsin's SEL and Equitable Multi-Level System of Supports (MLSS) model.

The school's approach is grounded in trauma-informed care and culturally responsive teaching, recognizing that students learn best when they feel physically, emotionally, and culturally safe. Staff receive professional development in trauma-sensitive practices, restorative approaches, and inclusive instructional design. Classrooms prioritize *connection before correction* and emphasize routines that build predictability, trust, and belonging.

Within the MTSS framework, Riverview Roots employs evidence-based PBIS strategies to proactively teach and reinforce positive behavior expectations. These expectations are rooted in the school's core values of, *respect, responsibility, empathy, wonder, and joy*, and are consistently modeled and reinforced through positive relationships and restorative conversations.

Through this integrated model, students learn to recognize and manage emotions, build respectful relationships across differences, and contribute positively to the classroom and broader community. At Riverview Roots, SEL is not a standalone program—it is the foundation of a thriving, inclusive, and joyful school culture.

Physical Education and Outdoor Wellness

The Outdoor Education & Physical Wellness program at Riverview Roots Elementary provides students with a comprehensive physical education experience that combines three days of core Physical Education (PE) instruction with two days of outdoor and adventure-based learning each

week. Led by a licensed physical education teacher, the program meets and exceeds the Wisconsin Standards for Physical Education (2020) while fully embracing the school's *Nature as Classroom* philosophy.

During core PE sessions, students develop movement competency, physical fitness, and teamwork skills through standards-based activities, cooperative games, and skill practice that promote lifelong wellness. On outdoor education days, students apply those skills in natural settings—participating in activities such as hiking, orienteering, fishing, cross-country games, and wilderness survival challenges that build environmental awareness and resilience.

This dual-structured model ensures that students achieve state standards for physical fitness and motor development while gaining confidence, coordination, and a deep appreciation for the natural environment. Physical education at Riverview Roots is not confined to a gym—it takes place in forests, fields, and trails, where movement and learning are intertwined with curiosity, stewardship, and joy.

Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness

All materials and instructional practices:

- represent diverse cultures
- affirm students' identities
- incorporate multilingual resources
- use UDL principles
- include community-based content

This approach improves engagement and academic achievement for multilingual students (Gay, 2018).

Rationale for Selected Materials

The combination of Into Reading, Bridges in Mathematics, Savvas elevateScience, and a coherent environmental education framework aligned to the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS) directly addresses the community needs identified through the 2024 Community Needs Assessment. Families expressed a desire for:

- Stronger foundational literacy instruction
- Engaging, hands-on approaches to math and science
- Increased access to nature-based and outdoor learning
- Trauma-informed and relationship-centered school culture
- Opportunities for bilingual and culturally inclusive education

To meet these needs, Riverview Roots integrates evidence-based core curricula with environmental education and outdoor experiential learning, utilizing Project Learning Tree (PLT)

and DPI-supported programs such as KEEP (energy education) and LEAF (forestry education) as supplemental resources. This integrated approach ensures that all students—regardless of background—receive instruction that is academically rigorous, culturally relevant, linguistically inclusive, and deeply engaging while building environmental literacy and stewardship.

Alignment with Wisconsin State Student Academic Standards

All instructional materials at Riverview Roots Elementary are carefully selected to align with the Wisconsin State Student Academic Standards, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science (NGSS), Social Studies, World Languages, and the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS). Instruction intentionally connects academic learning to outdoor, cultural, and community-based experiences through interdisciplinary, place-based approaches.

Environmental literacy is embedded across grade levels through inquiry-based science instruction, integrated environmental education, and outdoor learning experiences supported by PLT, KEEP, and LEAF. This cohesive alignment supports the school’s mission to educate the whole child through nature, culture, and curiosity, while preparing students to think critically, act responsibly, and engage meaningfully with their local and global communities.

Scope & Sequence

English Language Arts (4K–5)

Core Curriculum: Into Reading – Structured Literacy (Tier 1)

Intervention: UFLI Foundations (Tier 2 only)

4K

Students develop early literacy foundations through play-based, language-rich instruction. Instruction emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, and print concepts. By the end of 4K, students will recognize letters, produce and identify rhyming words, blend and segment syllables, demonstrate early phonemic awareness, and engage in shared reading experiences. Students begin expressing ideas through drawing, labeling, and dictated storytelling.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten instruction builds systematic phonological awareness and early phonics skills through explicit, structured routines. Students learn letter–sound correspondences, blend and segment phonemes, read simple decodable texts, and write basic sentences. Comprehension instruction focuses on retelling stories, identifying characters and settings, and making simple connections to text.

Grades 1–2

Students transition from learning to read to reading with increasing fluency and comprehension. Instruction emphasizes decoding one- and two-syllable words, spelling common phonics patterns, and developing automatic word recognition. Students write narrative, informational,

and opinion pieces with increasing structure and clarity. By the end of grade 2, students read connected text fluently and apply foundational skills to comprehension and writing tasks.

Grades 3–5

Upper elementary instruction deepens comprehension, vocabulary, and writing complexity. Students analyze characters, themes, and main ideas; cite textual evidence; and engage in collaborative discussions. Writing expectations include multi-paragraph narrative, informational, and opinion writing connected to environmental and community topics. Students use academic language and research skills to communicate ideas clearly.

Assessment: DIBELS/Acadience benchmarks, Into Reading assessments, writing rubrics, fluency checks, portfolios, and teacher observation.

Mathematics (4K–5)

Core Curriculum: Bridges in Mathematics

4K–K

Students develop number sense, pattern recognition, and spatial awareness. Instruction includes counting, comparing quantities, identifying shapes, and exploring patterns through hands-on activities.

Grades 1–2

Students build fluency with addition and subtraction, develop place value understanding, measure using standard units, and interpret simple data. Mathematical discourse and problem-solving are emphasized.

Grades 3–5

Students work with fractions, multi-digit operations, geometry, and data analysis. Real-world applications—including outdoor measurement, mapping, and data collection—strengthen conceptual understanding.

Assessment: Checkpoints, performance tasks, observation rubrics, math journals, and applied outdoor math projects.

Science & Environmental Education (4K–5)

Core Curriculum: Savvas elevateScience (NGSS-aligned)

Environmental Education Framework: Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS)

Supplemental Programs: Project Learning Tree (PLT), KEEP (Energy), LEAF (Forestry)

4K–K

Students observe weather patterns, plants, animals, and basic environmental systems through

guided outdoor exploration. Learning emphasizes curiosity, asking questions, and describing the natural world, supporting early science practices and ELS foundations.

Grades 1–2

Students conduct guided investigations, explore life cycles, habitats, energy use, and forces, and begin recording observations using simple data tools. Environmental education resources from PLT and KEEP support inquiry into ecosystems, conservation, and human–environment interactions.

Grades 3–5

Students design experiments, analyze data, model systems, and propose solutions to environmental challenges. Instruction integrates PLT, KEEP, and LEAF resources to deepen understanding of forestry, energy systems, sustainability, and civic responsibility. Stewardship projects connect scientific learning to community action and ELS civic engagement expectations.

Assessment: Science notebooks, investigations, presentations, stewardship projects, and teacher observation.

Social Studies (4K–5)

Approach: Integrated, Place-Based Instruction

4K–K

Students explore family roles, classroom community, and basic rules. Instruction builds awareness of self and community.

Grades 1–2

Students learn map skills, cultural traditions, and local history. Instruction emphasizes understanding community systems and cooperation.

Grades 3–5

Students examine civic systems, historical change, geography, and economic decision-making. Projects emphasize civic engagement, local history, and environmental responsibility.

Assessment: Journals, maps, service-learning projects, presentations, and reflections.

Spanish Language Instruction (4K–5)

Model: Elementary World Language Program

Frequency: 30 minutes, three times per week

4K–K

Students learn greetings, colors, numbers, songs, and simple commands through movement, stories, and games.

Grades 1–2

Students ask and answer simple questions, describe familiar objects, and engage in short conversational exchanges.

Grades 3–5

Students participate in short conversations, read and write simple sentences, and compare cultures. Vocabulary connects to nature, weather, animals, and community life.

Assessment: Oral language tasks, vocabulary demonstrations, written samples, and portfolios.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) & School Culture (4K–5)

Frameworks: Responsive Classroom, CASEL, Wisconsin SEL Standards

4K–K

Students identify emotions, practice calming strategies, and build routines for cooperation.

Grades 1–2

Students demonstrate empathy, conflict resolution skills, and emotional regulation.

Grades 3–5

Students apply leadership skills, problem-solving strategies, and restorative practices within the school community.

Assessment: SEL rubrics, reflection journals, teacher observation, and goal-setting conferences.

Physical Education & Outdoor Wellness (4K–5)

Structure: 3 days PE, 2 days Outdoor Education weekly

4K–K

Students develop basic locomotor skills, coordination, and outdoor safety awareness.

Grades 1–2

Students build movement control, teamwork, and introductory outdoor skills.

Grades 3–5

Students set fitness goals, demonstrate teamwork, and develop competence in games, adventure activities, and outdoor challenges.

Assessment: Skill checklists, fitness logs, outdoor reflections, and observation.

Integration & Vertical Alignment Summary

Across all grade levels, Riverview Roots emphasizes:

- Strong foundational literacy and numeracy
- Inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning
- Daily connection to nature and community
- Intentional social-emotional development
- Equitable access through MTSS supports
- Environmental literacy and sustainability skills aligned to Wisconsin ELS standards across grade levels

This comprehensive scope and sequence ensures coherence across grades, alignment with Wisconsin standards, and fidelity to Riverview Roots’ mission of educating curious, compassionate, and capable learners connected to their world.

Sample Student Schedule (Elementary Division 4K–5)

The schedule below illustrates the typical instructional allocation for elementary grades. Times may vary slightly by grade level, but all students will participate in daily literacy and mathematics, Spanish language instruction three times per week, music instruction two times per week, and physical/outdoor education five times per week.

School Day: 8:05 a.m. – 3:35 p.m. (7.5 hours total, including lunch and recess)

Calendar: 180 instructional days (exceeds Wisconsin’s minimum 1,050 hours)

Time	Activity / Subject	Description & Integration Notes
8:05 – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival & Morning Meeting / SEL	Students begin the day with a morning meeting grounded in Responsive Classroom practices. Includes mindfulness, goal-setting, and social-emotional learning (SEL) aligned with Wisconsin SEL Standards.
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Literacy Block (Reading, Writing, Phonics)	Core literacy instruction using <i>Into Reading – Structured Literacy</i> . Includes whole-group lessons, small-group guided reading and intervention, phonics/word study, and writing workshop with integrated environmental and cultural themes.

10:30-10:45 a.m.	Morning Recess	Unstructured outdoor play
10:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Mathematics	<i>Bridges in Mathematics</i> emphasizing conceptual understanding, reasoning, and problem-solving. Outdoor math activities (e.g., measuring garden plots, collecting data) occur regularly.
11:45 – 12:15 p.m.	Health/SEL/ Library and Technology/iReady Learning Plans	Rotation includes health education, SEL lessons, digital literacy, library skills, and individualized i-Ready learning paths (1 day math, 1 day reading).
12:15 – 1:00 p.m.	Recess & Lunch	Unstructured outdoor play followed by a healthy lunch period that fosters social connection and wellness.
1:00 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.	Science / Social Studies	Alternating, inquiry-based units using <i>elevateScience</i> and place-based social studies. Projects connect students to community, ecology, and cultural learning.
1:40 – 2:10 p.m.	Spanish Language (3×/week) / Music (2×/week)	Spanish language instruction focused on communication, listening, and culture; or music twice per week to support rhythm, creativity, and expression.
2:10 – 2:40 p.m.	Outdoor Education & Physical Education	Three days of Core PE and two days of Outdoor Education led by a licensed PE teacher. Activities include cooperative games, hiking, orienteering, and outdoor skill-building.
2:40-3:05	Intervention Time	Targeted MTSS Tier 2/Tier 3 interventions in literacy, math, and SEL, enrichment extensions,

		and teacher-powered instructional decision-making.
3:05 - 3:25 p.m.	Bridges Number Corner	Daily concept-building routines with visual models, data collection, pattern exploration, and math discourse.
3:25 – 3:35 p.m.	Classroom Reflection & SEL Wrap-Up	Reflection circles, restorative conversations, celebration learning, and goal tracking; reinforcing community, empathy, and self-regulation.
3:35 – 3:40 p.m.	Dismissal	Calm, structured transitions with connection and safety routines.

Schedule Rationale

This daily schedule integrates Riverview Roots’ three instructional pillars:

- Nature as Classroom: Outdoor learning embedded daily through PE, environmental investigations, and unstructured recess.
- Community and Culture: Spanish, SEL, and place-based learning foster belonging and global awareness.
- Whole-Child Development: Balance between academics, creativity, movement, and play ensures students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The schedule allows teachers flexibility to extend outdoor learning during favorable weather and integrates interdisciplinary projects across content areas while maintaining alignment with Wisconsin State Standards.

4.04 Instructional Methodology

Riverview Roots uses an integrated pedagogical approach built on:

Structured Literacy – Explicit instruction supports all learners and is especially effective for multilingual students and those at risk for reading difficulties.

Inquiry-Based Learning – Students investigate questions, conduct hands-on experiments, analyze evidence, and communicate findings.

Nature-Based Experiential Learning – Daily outdoor instruction enhances regulation, memory, motivation, and academic achievement (Chawla, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Teaching – Instruction affirms identity, builds from students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and supports equitable participation (Gay, 2018).

Trauma-Informed, Relationship-Based Teaching – Predictable routines, emotional safety, and relational trust improve learning readiness (NCTSN, 2017).

Differentiation & MLSS – Instruction is adapted through small groups, Tier 2 interventions (UFLI), enrichment, and UDL practices.

21st-Century Skills – Students build collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, leadership, and environmental citizenship through project-based learning.

This combined pedagogical approach meets the developmental and cultural needs of our community by:

- providing explicit, equitable access to foundational academic skills
- supporting students with diverse learning profiles
- leveraging outdoor learning to enhance mental health and engagement
- honoring linguistic and cultural diversity
- fostering belonging, safety, and emotional wellbeing
- building transferable skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and environmental stewardship

Together, these methods create a nurturing, rigorous, and inclusive learning environment where every child—regardless of ability, background, or experience—can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

4.05 Research Supporting Instructional Materials & Methodology

Riverview Roots Elementary’s instructional model is grounded in decades of empirical research across structured literacy, mathematics learning, inquiry-based science, environmental education aligned to the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS), social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practice.

Structured Literacy

The school’s literacy program aligns with the Science of Reading, which is supported by extensive interdisciplinary research demonstrating that children learn to read most effectively through explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

English Language Arts
(*Into Reading, UFLI*)

Into Reading reflects evidence-based literacy practices, including explicit vocabulary instruction, exposure to complex texts, and integrated reading–writing cycles. Research indicates that these approaches improve comprehension, knowledge-building, and long-term academic performance (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

UFLI Foundations is grounded in structured literacy research emphasizing multisensory instruction, cumulative skill development, and explicit phonics instruction (Moats, 2020; University of Florida Literacy Institute, 2022). Its predictable routines and clear scope and sequence support strong outcomes for early readers, multilingual learners, and students with dyslexia or phonological processing challenges (Spear-Swerling, 2019).

Mathematics
(*Bridges in Mathematics*)

Bridges in Mathematics is supported by research on conceptual mathematics instruction, visual modeling, and standards-aligned problem solving (Math Learning Center, 2021). Research demonstrates that conceptual understanding paired with procedural fluency improves mathematical reasoning, transfer of learning, and retention (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2014).

Science & Environmental Education
(*elevateScience, ELS, PLT, KEEP, LEAF*)

Savvas elevateScience aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), emphasizing inquiry, modeling, and real-world problem solving (NGSS Lead States, 2013). Research indicates that phenomena-based, hands-on science instruction deepens conceptual understanding and supports durable learning (National Research Council, 2012).

Environmental education at Riverview Roots is aligned with the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS), which are grounded in research demonstrating gains in systems thinking, civic engagement, and problem-solving skills (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2020).

Project Learning Tree (PLT), KEEP (energy education), and LEAF (forestry education) are supported by decades of environmental education research showing that outdoor, inquiry-based learning increases academic achievement, improves executive functioning, reduces stress, and strengthens environmental stewardship (American Institutes for Research, 2005; Chawla, 2015). These programs enhance—but do not replace—core science instruction.

Nature-Based & Experiential Learning

The school's *Nature as Classroom* model is supported by experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and research demonstrating that regular engagement with natural environments improves cognitive functioning, motivation, behavior regulation, physical health, and academic engagement (Children & Nature Network, 2019).

Trauma-Informed Care & Social-Emotional Learning (Responsive Classroom + CASEL)

Social-emotional learning (SEL) approaches are supported by strong evidence demonstrating improved academic performance, social skills, and behavioral outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011). Responsive Classroom practices have been shown to improve student engagement, academic achievement, and classroom climate (Eppolito & Klotz, 2019).

Trauma-informed practices draw on neuroscience and developmental research indicating that predictable routines, emotional safety, and strong adult–student relationships improve learning readiness and self-regulation (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017).

Evaluating Innovative Practices

Riverview Roots will evaluate the effectiveness of its innovative instructional practices through a structured continuous improvement process grounded in developmental evaluation. The school will use action research cycles, quarterly data reviews, and multiple sources of feedback—including student, family, and staff surveys; classroom observation rubrics; and environmental learning portfolios—to assess both student outcomes and program implementation.

Findings are reviewed by school leadership and teacher leaders during scheduled data meetings and are integrated into the school’s MLSS/MTSS framework to inform instructional adjustments, professional learning priorities, and program refinement. This process ensures that innovation is monitored systematically and improved based on evidence, consistent with best practices in continuous improvement and developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011).

4.06 Comprehensive Education Program

Riverview Roots ensures students receive a broad, developmentally appropriate education that includes arts, physical education, wellness, social-emotional development, and 21st century skills—supported by strong research foundations.

Arts Education

Arts integration enhances creativity, engagement, and cognitive development (Deasy, 2002). Creative visual and performing arts activities are embedded in literacy, environmental education, and community-based learning.

Physical Education & Outdoor Wellness

Daily movement supports executive functioning, attention, and academic achievement (Ratey, 2008). The school’s 3-day Core PE + 2-day Outdoor Wellness model connects physical fitness to outdoor learning, aligning with research showing that movement in natural environments improves resilience, motivation, and physical well-being (Dyment & Bell, 2008).

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

CASEL identifies self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and

responsible decision-making as critical competencies for lifelong success. SEL instruction improves academic outcomes by an average of 11 percentile points (Durlak et al., 2011).

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed environments prioritize safety, predictable routines, and relational trust. These elements significantly improve student emotional regulation and engagement (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017).

21st Century Skills

Students develop:

- critical thinking
- problem solving
- communication
- collaboration
- leadership
- environmental citizenship

through project-based and place-based learning.

Hands-on learning rooted in community and environmental inquiry aligns with research demonstrating improved critical thinking, collaboration, and deeper understanding of academic content (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Health & Wellness

Outdoor recess and unstructured play support physical health, stress reduction, creativity, and social skills development (Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005).

4.07 Standards, Assessment, and Accountability

Riverview Roots Elementary will utilize a comprehensive system of assessments—including statewide tests, nationally normed growth measures, early literacy screeners, and curriculum-based performance tasks—to monitor achievement and ensure high expectations for all learners. Goals have been intentionally calibrated to be ambitious yet realistic, reflecting OEO Phase I feedback and research on growth patterns for new schools serving diverse student populations.

Baseline data will be collected during the first six weeks of the school’s operational year. Growth goals are designed to reflect Riverview Roots’ commitment to equity, ensuring that multilingual learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities are held to high expectations with appropriate supports.

Annual Academic Goals (Years 1–2)

Literacy (ELA – Grades 3–5)

- 40% of students will meet or exceed proficiency on the ELA Forward Exam by the end of year two.
- 70% of students will meet their annual growth target on i-Ready.
- 80% of K–2 students will meet or exceed grade-level benchmarks in early literacy (DIBELS/Acadience).

Mathematics (Grades 3–5)

- 35% of students will meet or exceed proficiency on the Math Forward Exam by the end of year two.
- 70% of students will meet their annual growth target on i-Ready.
- 85% of K–2 students will meet numeracy benchmarks aligned to the Wisconsin Mathematics Standards.

Science (Grades 4–5)

- 45% of students will meet or exceed proficiency on the Science Forward Exam by year two.
100% of students will complete at least one environmental inquiry investigation annually.

Long-Term (Five-Year) Achievement Goals

Literacy (ELA)

- 50% proficiency on the ELA Forward Exam by Year 3; 60% proficiency on the ELA Forward Exam by year five
- 85% of students will meet annual growth target on i-Ready by year five
- 90–95% of K–2 students will demonstrate mastery of foundational skills through UFLI Foundations and DIBELS benchmarks
- 100% of English Learners will meet ACCESS *growth* targets annually

Mathematics

- 45% proficiency on the Math Forward Exam by year three; 55% proficiency on the Math Forward Exam by year five
- 80% of students will meet annual math growth targets on i-Ready by year five

Science

- 55% proficiency on the 4th grade Science Forward Exam by year five
- 80% of students will demonstrate proficiency on environmental capstone investigations aligned to NGSS scientific practices

Students With Disabilities

- 100% will show measurable progress toward IEP goals
- 70% will meet individualized growth targets by Year 2; 80% by year five

English Learners

- 100% meet annual ACCESS growth targets each year
- 40% will reach proficiency (4.0+) by year five

These goals balance high expectations with realistic growth trajectories for a new public charter school serving a diverse student population, including economically disadvantaged students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. Research on start-up charters shows that initial proficiency rates often reflect prior schooling experiences rather than instructional quality; therefore, Riverview Roots emphasizes growth metrics and foundational skill mastery during the first two years (CREDO, 2015). As instructional systems stabilize, staffing becomes consistent, and structured literacy strengthens foundational skills, proficiency goals rise appropriately over the five-year trajectory. This phased approach reflects OEO guidance and demonstrates the school's commitment to both excellence and equity.

4.08 Goals for Non-Academic Accountability Measures

In alignment with Riverview Roots' whole-child mission, the school will monitor and report on additional indicators of student success beyond academic proficiency.

A. Attendance Goals

- Maintain at least 92% daily attendance in years one and two.
- Maintain at least 94% daily attendance by year five.
- Reduce chronic absenteeism to below 15% by year three and below 10% by year five.

B. School Climate & SEL Goals

- 80% of students will report feeling safe, included, and connected to their school community by year two, increasing to 90% by year five.
- 85% of students will demonstrate grade-level SEL competencies (Wisconsin SEL Standards) for their grade band by year five
- 100% of classrooms will implement Responsive Classroom practices and classroom meetings daily.

C. Behavior & Engagement Goals

- Maintain exclusionary discipline (suspension, expulsion) rates of fewer than one incident per 100 students per month in year one, reducing to 0.5 incidents per 100 students per month by year five.

- Reducing to 2 per 100 by year five
- 100% of students will complete an outdoor learning experience weekly.
- 100% of classrooms will implement Responsive Classroom practices and morning meetings.

D. Family & Community Engagement

- 85% of families will attend at least one school event or parent-teacher conference in year one, increasing to 95% by year five
- 90% of families will report satisfaction with the school's climate and communication on the annual family climate survey by year one, increasing to 95% by year five.

4.09 Internal Assessments and Analysis of Student Learning

Riverview Roots uses a comprehensive, multi-measure assessment system aligned to curriculum, the Science of Reading, Wisconsin standards, and our MTSS framework.

A. Internal Assessment System

Literacy (ELA)

- iReady Reading - fall/winter/spring
- DIBELS/Acadience (K–5) – 3x/year + monthly progress monitoring
- UFLI Foundations skills checks (4K–2) – ongoing
- Into Reading unit assessments – 6–8x/year
- Running records / decodable text assessments – ongoing
- Writing performance tasks – 3x/year
- ACCESS for ELs (EL students) – 1x/year

Mathematics

- i-Ready Math – fall/winter/spring
- Bridges unit checkpoints and end of unit assessments – approximately bi-weekly
- Performance tasks & outdoor math tasks – quarterly

Science & Social Studies

- elevateScience investigations & PLT field tasks – unit-based
- Project presentations & notebooks – ongoing

Spanish

- Oral proficiency checks – quarterly
- Vocabulary and comprehension assessments – every 6–8 weeks

SEL & Behavior

- SEL rubrics aligned to CASEL and Wisconsin SEL Standards – 3x/year
- Behavioral data (PBIS, incident data, positive notes home) – monthly
- Student climate surveys – 2x/year

B. Use of Assessment Data for Continuous Improvement

Assessment data will be analyzed at:

- Weekly grade-level PLC meetings
- Monthly MTSS leadership team meetings
- Quarterly schoolwide data retreats
- At least monthly SST (Student Support Team) meetings

Data will be used to:

- Identify students needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports
- Revise small-group instruction
- Adjust curriculum pacing and instructional strategies
- Monitor subgroup performance (ELs, SWD, economically disadvantaged)
- Set intervention goals using progress monitoring
- Communicate progress to families
- Reflect on program effectiveness and inform schoolwide improvement planning

Teachers will receive ongoing professional development in data-informed instruction, progress monitoring tools, and structured literacy practices.

Section V: SUPPORTS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

5.01 Diverse Learners and At-Risk Groups Expected to Be Served

Riverview Roots Elementary anticipates serving a diverse student population reflective of Burlington, Elkhorn, Lake Geneva, and the historical Lyons Center Elementary attendance area. These projections are informed by Wisconsin DPI demographic data, the Riverview Roots Community Needs Assessment, stakeholder interviews, and early family interest surveys.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Regional data indicate a substantial proportion of families experiencing economic hardship. Research demonstrates that predictable routines, strong adult–student relationships, and enriched learning environments mitigate the effects of economic stress on academic and social-emotional development (Blair & Raver, 2016). Riverview Roots’ small class sizes, nature-integrated learning model, and trauma-informed practices are intentionally designed to support students facing economic barriers.

English Learners

The Lyons–Burlington region continues to experience growth in Spanish-speaking and bilingual households. Riverview Roots will implement an Integrated ESL instructional model aligned with Wisconsin DPI guidance and the WIDA English Language Development Standards. Explicit language instruction, structured literacy routines, and vocabulary-rich classroom practices are strongly associated with improved academic outcomes for English Learners (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Students With Disabilities

As an independent Local Education Agency (LEA), Riverview Roots will serve students with IEPs and provide all services required under IDEA. The projected percentage reflects historical Lyons Center enrollment patterns, regional special education incidence rates, and documented family interest in the school's small class sizes, structured literacy approach, integrated SEL supports, and hands-on learning environment. The school's instructional design—including explicit literacy instruction, multisensory supports, MTSS-aligned interventions, and inclusive practices—is well suited for students with Specific Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, speech-language needs, and emotional-behavioral disabilities (NCLD, 2019).

Students Experiencing Trauma or Mental Health Needs

Community partners and family feedback indicate increased exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and mental health challenges. Trauma-informed school models have been shown to improve student regulation, attendance, engagement, and learning readiness (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017). Riverview Roots embeds trauma-sensitive practices throughout the school day, including co-regulation strategies, restorative practices, predictable routines, and daily outdoor learning.

Hispanic and Multiracial Students

Lyons and neighboring communities, including Lake Geneva, have historically enrolled higher percentages of Hispanic and multiracial students than surrounding districts. Riverview Roots' culturally responsive teaching practices, inclusive curriculum materials, and early Spanish language instruction are designed to foster belonging and academic success for students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2018).

Rural Students Facing Barriers to Access

Families in Lyons and surrounding rural areas often experience transportation and access barriers to larger district schools. Research indicates that rural students benefit from community-centered, small-scale learning environments that emphasize relationships and local relevance (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Riverview Roots' neighborhood-based location and place-based programming are intentionally designed to meet these needs.

5.02 Comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Riverview Roots Elementary implements a comprehensive, data-driven **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** to meet the academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and linguistic needs of all students. The school's MTSS framework integrates academic instruction, behavioral supports, and SEL within a unified system that emphasizes early identification, inclusive practices, and equitable access to learning.

Tier 1: Universal Instruction and Supports for All Students

Academic Instruction (Tier 1 Core)

- English Language Arts – Into Reading (Core Program):
Into Reading serves as the school's Tier 1 ELA curriculum, providing systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing, and language development. Instruction is aligned with the Science of Reading and Wisconsin ELA Standards and is implemented consistently across classrooms.
- Mathematics – Bridges in Mathematics:
Daily, standards-aligned instruction emphasizing conceptual understanding, mathematical discourse, and problem-solving.
- Science & Environmental Education – elevateScience + ELS Alignment:
NGSS-aligned inquiry-based science instruction complemented by environmental education aligned to the Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (ELS). Instruction is supported by Project Learning Tree (PLT), KEEP, and LEAF through structured outdoor investigations and stewardship activities.
- Social Studies:
Place-based, culturally responsive units aligned to Wisconsin Social Studies Standards, integrating community and environmental contexts where appropriate.
- Spanish Language Instruction (3× per week):
Vocabulary-rich, communication-focused instruction aligned to Wisconsin World Language Standards and designed to support cultural awareness and language development for all students.

Behavioral and Social-Emotional Learning (Tier 1 Universal Supports)

Riverview Roots embeds SEL and behavioral supports throughout the school day:

- Character Strong SEL Curriculum provides explicit instruction in empathy, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and relationship skills aligned with CASEL competencies.
- Responsive Classroom practices, including Morning Meeting, interactive modeling, teacher language, and community norms, foster belonging, predictability, and positive behavior (Eppolito & Klotz, 2019).

- Trauma-informed practices, such as co-regulation strategies, sensory supports, restorative conversations, and predictable routines, support emotional safety and learning readiness (NCTSN, 2017).
- Culturally responsive teaching ensures instruction reflects students' identities, languages, and lived experiences (Gay, 2018).
- Daily outdoor learning and movement support executive functioning, attention, and stress regulation (Chawla, 2015).

Tier 2: Targeted Supports (Approximately 10–15% of Students)

Tier 2 interventions occur during the daily intervention block (2:40–3:05 p.m.) and throughout the school day as needed.

Academic Tier 2

- UFLI Foundations, SIPPS, or other tier 2 literacy small-group intervention program for students needing additional phonological awareness, decoding, encoding, or fluency practice
- Targeted reading groups focused on fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Bridges-based small-group math intervention
- Targeted English language development aligned with WIDA standards
- Short-term, data-driven intervention cycles

Progress monitoring occurs every 2–4 weeks to determine responsiveness to intervention.

Behavioral/SEL Tier 2

- Small group or individual SEL instruction
- Pupil Services led small groups
- Check-In/Check-Out
- Structured mentorship
- Individualized regulation supports
- Structured break plans
- Goal tracking and self-monitoring routines

Students remain fully included in Tier 1 instruction while receiving Tier 2 supports.

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Supports (Approximately 5–10% of Students)

Academic Tier 3

- Daily intensive reading intervention using adapted UFLI routines and/or specialized programs aligned to student needs

- Intensive, individualized math intervention using research-based tools
- Targeted language interventions for multilingual learners
- Increased instructional minutes
- 1:1 or very small-group instruction
- Individualized therapy services to access curriculum (speech, OT, PT)

Behavioral Tier 3

- Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA)
- Individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Trauma-informed crisis prevention and recovery strategies
- Intensive collaboration with families, mental health providers, and school teams

5.03 Special Education (LEA Responsibilities)

Riverview Roots Elementary will serve as its own Local Education Agency (LEA) and assumes full responsibility for compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and guidance, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requirements.

As an LEA, Riverview Roots is responsible for the following IDEA requirements:

- Child Find
- Initial evaluations and reevaluations
- IEP development, implementation, and progress monitoring
- Provision of related services (speech, OT, PT, counseling)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Procedural safeguards and parent rights
- Hiring licensed special education teachers and service providers
- Accessible curriculum and accommodations
- Ongoing staff training and professional development

Riverview Roots uses an inclusion-first model, providing services in general education settings whenever possible. Co-teaching, collaborative planning, small-group instruction, and flexible learning spaces ensure that students with disabilities have access to rigorous core instruction with meaningful support.

Special education needs will be identified through grade-level universal screeners, regular data collection, and collaboration between general education teachers and special education staff and/or contracted service providers (e.g., special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, reading specialists). Students identified with academic or

developmental concerns will move through the MTSS framework described above, with collaboration among educators, families, and support staff.

If targeted Tier 2 interventions are not sufficient, students may be referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation to determine eligibility for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). During the evaluation process, teams will carefully rule out situational, instructional, or environmental factors—including lack of access to instruction in the student’s primary language—to avoid misidentification and ensure placement in the least restrictive environment.

Riverview Roots will employ, consult with, or contract qualified special education professionals as needed to serve its student population effectively.

Adequate Qualified Staffing

Riverview Roots will employ or contract with qualified, licensed professionals including a Director of Student Services, special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, paraprofessionals, and sign language interpreters as needed. The Director of Student Services will oversee special education and Section 504 programming, monitor caseloads, and ensure appropriate staffing levels to meet student needs.

Progress Monitoring and Exit from Services

Special education staff will monitor student progress using IEP-aligned assessments and data collection tools. IEP teams—including families—will meet at least annually to review progress, update goals, and determine continued eligibility. When students meet their IEP goals, teams will determine whether new goals are appropriate or whether reevaluation and potential exit from special education services is warranted.

Professional Development

Special education staff will participate in ongoing professional development aligned with licensure requirements and evidence-based instructional practices. General education teachers and support staff will also receive professional development in inclusive practices, structured literacy, accommodations, co-teaching, and trauma-informed instruction to ensure all staff are equipped to meet diverse learning needs.

Records Review and Transition Planning

Enrollment materials will include release-of-information forms allowing Riverview Roots to request student records, including IEPs, prior to the first day of school. Administrators will collaborate with sending districts to ensure required services are implemented immediately upon enrollment. Annual IEP reviews will support proactive staffing and service planning for subsequent school years.

Continuum of Services and Access to General Education

Riverview Roots provides a full continuum of services designed to ensure students with

disabilities have meaningful access to the general education curriculum. Services may include classroom accommodations, curriculum modifications, small-group instruction, co-teaching, and related services delivered within inclusive settings whenever appropriate. Collaboration among general educators, special educators, paraprofessionals, and contracted providers ensures individualized support aligned with student needs.

Family Involvement and Procedural Safeguards

Families will be informed of their rights and actively involved in all eligibility determinations, IEP meetings, and service decisions. Parents and guardians will have access to student records and receive regular progress updates through conferences, reports, and written communication. Notices and materials will be provided in both English and Spanish to ensure equitable access and participation.

Section 504 and Other Students with Disabilities

Riverview Roots Elementary will comply fully with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, but who do not qualify for special education services under IDEA, may be eligible for accommodations through a Section 504 Plan.

Students may be identified for Section 504 consideration through parent referral, teacher observation, MTSS data, medical documentation, or evaluation results. A multidisciplinary team will determine eligibility and develop a written 504 Plan outlining appropriate accommodations and supports.

Section 504 plans will be implemented within the general education setting and monitored regularly. Families will be informed of their procedural rights and included in plan development and review. Section 504 supports will be coordinated with the school's MTSS framework to ensure continuity and responsiveness to student needs.

5.04 Linguistically Diverse Learners

Methods for identifying EL students (and avoiding misidentification)

Riverview Roots will identify potential English Learners through a Home Language Survey completed during enrollment, consistent with Wisconsin DPI requirements. If the survey indicates exposure to or use of a language other than English in the home, the student will be referred for further screening.

Identification decisions will not be based on language exposure alone. Instead, students will be screened using the WIDA Screener, administered by trained staff, to determine English language proficiency across listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains. This process ensures that students are accurately identified and avoids misidentification due to factors such as limited prior

schooling, cultural differences, or speech/language delays unrelated to second language acquisition.

Programs, Practices, and Strategies

Riverview Roots will implement an Integrated ESL instructional model, aligned with the Wisconsin DPI ESL Program Crosswalk. English Learners will receive language development support within the general education classroom, ensuring full access to grade-level academic content while developing English proficiency.

Instructional practices include:

- Explicit language objectives aligned to WIDA English Language Development Standards
- Scaffolded instruction (visual supports, modeling, sentence frames, and structured discourse)
- Use of structured literacy practices that support multilingual learners
- Small-group language development as needed during intervention blocks
- Culturally responsive teaching practices that affirm students' linguistic and cultural assets

All students will work toward Wisconsin Academic Content Standards while English Learners simultaneously progress toward WIDA proficiency benchmarks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

English Learners will participate in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment annually. Results will be analyzed by the instructional team to evaluate growth across all four language domains and inform instructional planning.

Progress will be monitored using:

- ACCESS growth data aligned to Wisconsin DPI EL growth expectations
- Classroom-based formative assessments
- Teacher observation and language samples

Students will be exited from EL services when they meet DPI-established proficiency criteria. After exiting, students will be monitored for two years, with staff reviewing academic performance at each report card period to ensure continued success without EL services. If concerns arise, appropriate supports will be provided in accordance with DPI guidance.

Staffing for EL students

Riverview Roots will ensure that English Learners are supported by appropriately trained and qualified staff. The school will employ or contract with a licensed ESL teacher to provide specialized language development services aligned with WIDA English Language Development Standards and Wisconsin DPI requirements.

In addition, one of Riverview Roots' founding teachers is an experienced English Learner (EL) educator, bringing specialized expertise in supporting multilingual students through integrated, classroom-based instruction. This educator will play a leadership role in:

- supporting the implementation of the Integrated ESL model,
- coaching classroom teachers on WIDA-aligned instructional strategies,
- modeling sheltered instruction techniques, and
- collaborating with the Director of Student Services to review EL data and student progress.

All general education teachers will receive ongoing professional development in:

- WIDA Can Do Descriptors and performance definitions,
- scaffolding academic language within core instruction,
- vocabulary and oral language development, and
- culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices.

This combination of licensed ESL staffing, in-house EL expertise, and schoolwide professional learning ensures that English Learners have equitable access to the general education curriculum and receive instruction that supports both language development and academic success.

Section VI: STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PLAN

6.01 Discipline Approach Aligned to School Culture & Climate

Riverview Roots Elementary is grounded in a nature-integrated, community-centered, and relationship-driven model of education. The school's discipline approach is designed to preserve a positive learning environment by emphasizing prevention, belonging, skill-building, and restorative practices rather than punitive responses. We recognize that student behavior is a form of communication and respond by identifying root causes through connection, compassion, and collaborative problem-solving.

Behavioral expectations are explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced through daily routines, social-emotional learning, and consistent adult practices. Staff use restorative circles, reflection conversations, and developmentally appropriate conflict-resolution strategies to help students repair harm, rebuild relationships, and learn self-regulation skills. Nature-based regulation spaces and outdoor movement are intentionally used to support emotional regulation and reduce escalation.

Classrooms are designed to be calm, predictable, and supportive. Teachers employ proactive strategies including strong routines, clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and relationship-based teaching. When behavioral concerns arise, the school uses a tiered system of

supports aligned to its MTSS framework. Interventions may include reteaching expectations, check-in/check-out systems, restorative conversations, peer mediation, small-group SEL supports, and individualized behavior plans.

Suspension or expulsion is used only as a last resort and only in situations involving significant safety concerns or repeated behaviors that substantially disrupt learning despite documented interventions. This approach ensures discipline practices preserve student dignity, instructional time, and a safe, inclusive school climate.

6.02 How Students & Families Will Be Informed

Riverview Roots will communicate its discipline philosophy, expectations, and procedures clearly and consistently to ensure transparency and shared understanding between school and home. Families will be informed through multiple accessible methods, including:

- The Family & Student Handbook, provided at enrollment, updated annually, and available in English and Spanish
- Back-to-School Night and Orientation, where discipline expectations and procedures are reviewed
- Classroom community agreements, co-created with students and revisited regularly
- The school website, where the full discipline policy and grievance procedures are posted
- Welcome materials, regular teacher communication, and family meetings as needed
- Translation and interpretation services for families whose primary language is not English

Students learn expectations through daily routines, morning meetings, and modeling during the opening weeks of school (the “Roots & Routines” period) and throughout the year. Expectations are posted in classrooms and common areas using student-friendly, culturally responsive language.

6.03 Fairness, Equity, and IDEA Compliance in Discipline

Riverview Roots is committed to equitable discipline practices and full compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable state and federal requirements. Discipline decisions for students with disabilities will consider disability-related needs, required accommodations, and procedural protections, including manifestation determination reviews when applicable.

The school will ensure that:

- Students with IEPs and 504 Plans receive behavioral supports and accommodations as outlined in their plans
- Disciplinary removals do not result in an inappropriate change of placement

- Families are informed of procedural safeguards and involved in all required meetings
- Behavioral interventions prioritize instructional access and least restrictive environment (LRE) considerations

6.04 Monitoring and Responding to Disproportionality

Riverview Roots will actively monitor discipline data to prevent and address disproportionality. School leadership will maintain a discipline data dashboard tracking all office referrals, classroom removals, suspensions, and expulsions disaggregated by:

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Students with disabilities
- English Learners
- Socioeconomic status

Discipline data will be reviewed monthly by the leadership team using a structured analysis process to identify patterns, root causes, and inequities. When disproportionality is identified, the school will implement corrective actions that may include:

- Targeted professional development (implicit bias, culturally responsive practices, trauma-informed care, de-escalation)
- Coaching and observation feedback for staff
- Adjustments to routines, supervision, or instructional practices
- Enhanced family communication and partnership
- Targeted behavioral interventions or support plans

Findings and improvement actions will be reported to the Board of Directors and summarized annually for the school community as part of the school's continuous improvement process.

6.05 Review of Discipline Policies

Riverview Roots will conduct an annual review of its discipline policies to ensure alignment with school culture, student needs, equity goals, and current legal requirements. The review process includes:

- Annual Board Policy Review, with public posting of proposed changes
- Input from teachers and support staff, gathered through surveys and structured staff discussions
- Student voice opportunities, including restorative councils, classroom meetings, and student advisory groups
- Family input, collected through family forums, surveys, and the Parent Advisory Council

- Community partner feedback, especially from youth-serving organizations connected to the school

Updated policies will be communicated to families during enrollment each summer and posted on the school website. This collaborative process ensures discipline practices remain transparent, equitable, legally sound, and reflective of the full school community.

Appendix B provides the full proposed discipline policy for Riverview Roots Elementary School.

Section VII: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CAPACITY

7.01 School Leadership Team

Riverview Roots Elementary operates using a teacher-powered instructional model supported by clearly defined administrative authority and governance oversight. This structure promotes high-quality instruction, shared professional responsibility, and full compliance with state, federal, and authorizer requirements. Research on distributed and teacher-powered leadership demonstrates improved instructional coherence and implementation when shared leadership is paired with clear lines of authority and accountability (Spillane, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2008).

School Director (Part-Time in Initial Years)

The School Director serves as the school's chief administrator and holds final authority for instructional supervision, staff evaluation, student discipline, school safety, legal compliance, and implementation of Board-approved policies. The School Director is responsible for ensuring adherence to Wisconsin statutes, DPI requirements, IDEA and Section 504 obligations, and the terms of the charter contract.

This role is intentionally structured as mentorship-focused and transitional, providing experienced leadership while supporting the development of long-term internal leadership capacity.

Director of Operations (Part-Time in Initial Years)

Riverview Roots will designate a part-time Director of Operations to oversee non-instructional systems and ensure operational accountability, particularly in coordination with contracted service providers. The Director of Operations is responsible for day-to-day operational oversight, including finance coordination, enrollment systems, compliance timelines, facilities management, and vendor oversight.

Facilities responsibilities include coordination of building access and use, routine maintenance and repairs, safety inspections, compliance with occupancy and health requirements, and liaison

with landlords, contractors, and municipal agencies as needed. The Director of Operations ensures the school facility is safe, functional, and aligned with instructional needs.

This role serves as the primary internal liaison to contracted partners (such as business office, payroll, accounting, HR, and facilities-related vendors) and ensures that all operational deliverables align with Board-approved budgets, policies, and timelines. The Director of Operations does not hold instructional authority and works in close coordination with the School Director, who retains final decision-making authority.

Teacher Leadership Team (Teacher-Powered Governance)

Instructional leadership at Riverview Roots is shared through a Teacher Leadership Team (TLC) composed of licensed classroom teachers. The TLC provides structured, collective input related to curriculum implementation, instructional coherence, assessment practices, MTSS data review, professional learning priorities, and school culture.

All members of the Teacher Leadership Team receive an annual leadership stipend in recognition of the additional responsibilities and collaborative work performed outside of regular instructional duties. Stipends compensate teachers for participation in leadership meetings, data review cycles, curriculum planning, and continuous improvement activities.

The TLC functions in an advisory and collaborative capacity only and does not hold supervisory, evaluative, or legal authority. All instructional and operational decisions occur within Board-approved policies and under the oversight of the School Director, ensuring accountability while centering educator expertise. Research indicates teacher leadership is most effective when decision-making authority is clearly bounded (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Founding Teacher-Leader / Director of Teaching & Learning

The Founding Teacher-Leader / Director of Teaching & Learning serves as a full-time classroom teacher while providing day-to-day instructional coordination across grade levels. This role supports curriculum alignment, MTSS implementation, data-informed instructional improvement, and facilitation of professional learning in collaboration with the School Director and Teacher Leadership Team.

This position does not include administrative, supervisory, or evaluative authority. Maintaining an active teaching assignment ensures instructional leadership remains grounded in classroom practice and supports fidelity of implementation for structured literacy and MTSS initiatives (Bryk et al., 2010).

The Founding Teacher-Leader receives an additional annual leadership stipend reflecting the expanded scope of coordination and facilitation responsibilities beyond classroom teaching. Stipend levels are reviewed annually based on role scope and school needs.

Director of Student Services

The Director of Student Services (part-time, 0.4–0.6 FTE) oversees special education, Section 504, and English Learner services. This role ensures IDEA compliance, Child Find implementation, evaluation processes, service delivery, progress monitoring, and inclusive access to the general education curriculum. The Director of Student Services works in coordination with the School Director, who retains final LEA authority.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides governance and oversight, including mission stewardship, fiscal oversight, policy adoption, and evaluation of the School Director. The Board does not engage in day-to-day school operations.

Clarifying Statement:

Instructional leadership at Riverview Roots is teacher-powered; administrative authority, staff supervision and evaluation, and legal accountability are clearly assigned to the School Director and Governing Board to ensure compliance, stability, and effective governance.

7.02 Qualifications and Capacity of the Design/Planning Team

The Riverview Roots design and planning team brings strong collective capacity across instruction, operations, governance, community engagement, and outdoor education. Team members include licensed Wisconsin educators, experienced nonprofit and governance leaders, and community partners with deep ties to the Lyons–Burlington area. Together, the team demonstrates the knowledge, experience, and systems-level understanding necessary to successfully implement the proposed school design.

Instructional capacity is anchored by multiple licensed educators with experience in early elementary instruction, structured literacy aligned to the Science of Reading (including UFLI Foundations, LETRS-informed practice, and Into Reading), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), inclusive instructional practices, and trauma-informed and culturally responsive teaching. This expertise ensures the school’s instructional model is both research-based and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.

Operational and governance capacity is provided through founding board members and advisors with experience in nonprofit leadership, public school finance, fiscal oversight, compliance, human resources, facilities planning, and strategic decision-making. The board’s composition supports strong internal controls, responsible budgeting, and adherence to state, federal, and authorizer requirements—critical elements for a start-up charter school.

Community engagement capacity is a defining strength of the planning team. Several founding members are parents of prospective students and lifelong residents of the Lyons–Burlington area. Team members have led and participated in community listening sessions, needs assessments,

and outreach efforts, and have demonstrated the ability to build trust with families across socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This grounding ensures the school model reflects authentic community priorities and maintains strong family partnerships over time.

Environmental and outdoor education capacity is strengthened through mission-aligned partnerships and local expertise. The Lyons Biodiversity Project provides access to ecological knowledge, stewardship priorities, and community-connected environmental work that aligns with the school's Nature as Classroom model. In addition, relationships with Kettle Moraine Land Trust support field-based learning opportunities and strengthen place-based instruction grounded in local ecosystems. These partners contribute programmatic resources and learning connections; all instructional decisions and student programming remain under the school's leadership and Board-approved plans.

As a founding educator, Melissa Grandi brings over a decade of experience as a licensed elementary classroom teacher with deep expertise in curriculum design, structured literacy implementation, and MTSS. Her professional background includes leading literacy instruction aligned to the Science of Reading, supporting diverse learners through data-informed practices, and integrating social-emotional learning and trauma-informed approaches into daily instruction. Ms. Grandi has played a central role in community engagement, school design, and instructional visioning for Riverview Roots, grounding the school's teacher-powered model in classroom practice and local context. While she intends to pursue formal administrative preparation through the UW–Madison IDEA Principal Licensure Program as part of a planned leadership development pathway, she does not currently serve in a licensed administrative role. Administrative authority, staff evaluation, and legal accountability are clearly assigned to the School Director and Governing Board.

Collectively, the planning team's instructional expertise, governance capacity, community leadership, and access to experienced administrative mentorship demonstrate Riverview Roots' readiness to implement a high-quality, innovative, and sustainable public charter school aligned with its mission and design.

7.03 Partner Organizations, Agencies, and Consultants

Riverview Roots Elementary has engaged mission-aligned partners that provide technical assistance and specialized services while retaining all governance and decision-making authority within the school.

The Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) has provided individualized coaching and technical assistance throughout the planning and design process, including school model development, governance guidance, and alignment with authorizer expectations. WRCCS support has included one-on-one consultation, application feedback, and compliance readiness coaching. WRCCS serves in an advisory and capacity-building role only.

The Wisconsin Independent Charter Schools Association (WICSA) has provided technical assistance, advocacy support, and fiscal sponsorship during the planning phase while Riverview Roots awaits final 501(c)(3) determination.

GT3 Group LLC, led by Katie Wise, supported the development of Riverview Roots' five-year financial projections, strengthening the school's financial planning capacity through conservative, enrollment-aligned budgeting. GT3 Group does not provide ongoing management services and holds no decision-making authority.

Riverview Roots anticipates contracting with CESA 6 for business office services, including payroll processing, accounting, financial reporting, internal controls support, and audit preparation. CESA 6 will function strictly as a service provider. All fiscal authority, budget decisions, and financial oversight remain with the School Director and Board of Directors. The school retains internal responsibility for compliance and accountability.

Additional partnerships with Kettle Moraine Land Trust, the Lyons Biodiversity Project, and local conservation organizations support the school's Nature as Classroom model through field-based learning opportunities and environmental stewardship projects. These partners provide programmatic enrichment only and do not hold governance or operational authority.

7.04 Principal / Head of School Candidate (Current Status)

At the time of application, Riverview Roots Elementary has not finalized a principal/head of school appointment. The school anticipates launching with a part-time School Director during the planning year and initial years of operation to provide experienced administrative leadership while the long-term leadership structure is developed thoughtfully and sustainably.

The Board of Directors is actively exploring candidates who are Wisconsin-licensed principals with demonstrated experience in:

- Elementary instruction and school operations
- MTSS implementation and inclusive student supports
- Charter, innovative, or community-centered school models

The School Director will serve as the school's chief administrator, responsible for compliance with state, federal, and authorizer requirements, staff supervision and evaluation, and organizational leadership. Within Riverview Roots' teacher-powered model, this role also includes mentoring teacher-leaders and supporting instructional coherence while honoring distributed leadership structures.

In addition, the Board of Directors is aware that the school's founder, Melissa Grandi, intends to pursue formal leadership training and mentorship with the long-term goal of interviewing and stepping into the School Director role in the future. This pathway will be developed deliberately

and transparently and is contingent upon appropriate licensure, demonstrated readiness, and formal Board approval. This pathway does not replace the need for experienced administrative leadership during the school's launch phase.

A resume/CV for the initial School Director will be submitted as soon as a candidate is finalized.

7.05 School Director Recruitment and Hiring

If a School Director is not secured prior to authorization, the Board of Directors will initiate a formal recruitment process within 30 days of authorization to ensure leadership capacity is established well in advance of the school's opening.

Timeline

- Within 15 days of authorization → Board of Directors confirms leadership needs, finalizes job description, and approves recruitment plan
- Within 30 days of authorization → School Director position publicly posted through WECAN and supplemental networks; active recruitment begins
- Within 60–90 days of authorization → Initial interviews conducted; interim or part-time School Director appointed if needed to support planning and compliance
- No later than six months prior to school opening → School Director formally appointed and actively working with the founding team on pre-opening planning, staffing, and operational readiness

If necessary, the Board will appoint an interim School Director to ensure uninterrupted leadership, supervision, and compliance.

Selection Criteria

Candidates for the School Director role will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Valid Wisconsin administrative licensure (or eligibility)
- Successful experience as a principal or school administrator
- Strong knowledge of MTSS, structured literacy, and data-informed instruction
- Experience supporting collaborative or distributed leadership models
- Demonstrated understanding of IDEA, Section 504, and school accountability systems
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and relationship-centered school culture

The position will be publicly posted through WECAN, the statewide educator employment system used by Wisconsin public schools. Recruitment efforts will be supplemented by outreach through WRCCS networks, Wisconsin Independent Charter Schools Advocates (WICSA) professional networks, retired administrator associations, and other established Wisconsin education leadership organizations.

Recruitment efforts will include postings through WECAN, the statewide educator employment system used by Wisconsin public schools, to ensure broad, transparent access for qualified Wisconsin-licensed candidates, in addition to outreach through WRCCS networks, retired administrator associations, and regional education leadership organizations.

Final selection will be made by the Board of Directors using a structured interview, reference, and vetting process aligned to the school's mission, instructional model, and compliance responsibilities.

7.06 School Leadership Recruitment and Hiring

Beyond the School Director, Riverview Roots will phase in additional leadership and management roles based on enrollment growth and programmatic needs. Anticipated positions include:

- Director of Student Services
- Founding Teacher-Leader / Director of Teaching & Learning
- Additional teacher-leader roles as the school expands

Hiring Criteria

Leadership and management candidates will be selected based on:

- Appropriate Wisconsin licensure or credentials
- Demonstrated experience serving diverse learners
- Alignment with the school's instructional model and core values
- Commitment to inclusive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed practices

Inclusive Recruitment Practices

All leadership and management positions will be publicly posted through WECAN, consistent with Wisconsin public school hiring requirements, and shared through professional networks, educator preparation programs, and community-based channels to broaden access.

Riverview Roots' hiring processes are designed to be transparent and equitable by using clearly defined job qualifications, standardized screening criteria, and consistent interview protocols for all candidates. Interview questions and evaluation rubrics are aligned to the specific competencies required for each role and are applied consistently to reduce subjectivity and bias in selection decisions.

Hiring teams will include multiple reviewers when feasible, ensuring that decisions are not based on a single perspective. Candidates are evaluated on demonstrated skills, experience, and readiness to work collaboratively within a teacher-powered school model, rather than on informal networks or prior administrative status alone.

Where appropriate, job postings and outreach materials will explicitly value experience with culturally responsive teaching, inclusive practices, multilingual learners, and community-centered school models, supporting the recruitment of candidates whose experiences align with the school’s mission and student population.

Selection decisions prioritize professional competence, alignment with the school’s educational model, and the ability to collaborate within shared leadership structures, while maintaining full compliance with state and federal employment requirements.

7.07 Support, Development, Evaluation, and Leadership Continuity

Riverview Roots maintains a clear and compliant system for leadership support, evaluation, and continuity that balances accountability with professional growth while honoring the school’s teacher-powered design.

Support and Development

The School Director will receive ongoing support and professional development through multiple, aligned structures to ensure strong instructional leadership, operational compliance, and sustainability.

This support includes regular collaboration with the Board of Directors, including goal-setting, feedback, and problem-solving aligned to charter performance expectations. The School Director will also engage in mentorship and professional learning focused on charter school leadership, MTSS implementation, structured literacy systems, instructional coherence, and compliance with state and federal requirements.

In addition, Riverview Roots will continue to engage the Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) for targeted technical assistance and leadership development. WRCCS provides individualized coaching, professional learning opportunities, and access to statewide best practices for charter leaders, with an emphasis on governance clarity, instructional quality, and start-up sustainability. WRCCS serves in an advisory and capacity-building role and does not exercise supervisory, evaluative, or decision-making authority.

Ongoing feedback and reflection will occur within the school’s distributed, teacher-powered leadership framework, ensuring that leadership development remains collaborative while maintaining clear administrative accountability.

The Board of Directors will regularly review leadership capacity and operational needs and may adjust the School Director role to increased hours or full-time status as enrollment, program complexity, and compliance demands grow.

Evaluation

The Board of Directors will evaluate the School Director annually using a formal evaluation tool aligned to:

- Student achievement and growth
- School culture and climate
- Instructional leadership and support of teacher-powered structures
- Operational effectiveness and legal compliance
- Progress toward charter goals and strategic priorities

Addressing Performance Concerns

If performance concerns arise, the Board will implement a structured improvement plan that includes clearly defined benchmarks, supports, and timelines. The Board retains authority to take further action if expectations are not met.

Leadership Transitions

In the event of leadership turnover, the Board of Directors will appoint an interim School Director and initiate a formal search process to ensure continuity, stability, and uninterrupted compliance with state, federal, and charter requirements.

Section VIII: ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN & CAPACITY – SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

8.01 Organizational Chart

Appendix C provides Riverview Roots Elementary School’s organizational chart for the first year of operation, clearly delineating roles, responsibilities, lines of authority, and reporting structures among the Governing Board, School Director, instructional staff, advisory bodies, and external service providers.

Lines of Authority and Reporting Structures

The organizational chart reflects a clear and hierarchical structure of authority appropriate for a start-up public charter school:

- Governing Board of Directors – The Governing Board holds ultimate fiduciary, legal, and oversight authority for the school. The Board is responsible for policy adoption, financial oversight, strategic direction, and the employment and evaluation of the School Director.
- School Director (Licensed Administrator) – The School Director reports directly to the Governing Board and holds final authority for the day-to-day management and operation of the school. This includes supervision and evaluation of staff, instructional leadership, compliance with state and federal requirements, and implementation of board-approved

policies. During the start-up year, the School Director role is anticipated to be part-time, with a planned transition to full-time as enrollment and operational demands increase.

- The Director of Operations – The Director of Operations reports to the School Director and is responsible for the non-instructional operational functions of the school. This includes financial management support, budgeting and purchasing coordination, facilities and maintenance oversight, transportation and food service coordination, enrollment and student records systems, compliance documentation, risk management, and coordination with contracted service providers (e.g., accounting, HR, payroll, and special education services). The Director of Operations ensures that operational systems are aligned with the school’s mission and support high-quality teaching and learning while maintaining fiscal and regulatory compliance.
- Teacher Leadership Council (TLC) – The Teacher Leadership Council is a structured advisory body composed of licensed teaching staff. The TLC supports shared decision-making related to curriculum implementation, instructional improvement, school culture, and professional learning. The organizational chart clearly indicates a dotted-line advisory relationship between the TLC and the School Director. The TLC does not hold legal, evaluative, or supervisory authority, ensuring clarity of accountability while supporting educator voice.
- Instructional and Student Support Staff – All instructional and support staff report to the School Director and are supervised in accordance with Wisconsin licensure and evaluation requirements.
- *Parent Advisory Council (PAC)* – The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a school-based leadership body that holds delegated authority over family engagement, volunteer coordination, community-building events, and parent-led fundraising activities. The PAC plays a central role in organizing school events, supporting outdoor learning and classroom experiences, coordinating regular volunteer participation, and strengthening connections between families, staff, and the broader community. While the PAC does not hold governance, policy, staffing, or supervisory authority, it operates with clearly defined leadership responsibility in its designated areas. PAC priorities, activities, and recommendations are shared regularly with the School Director and school leadership team to ensure alignment with the school’s mission, operational needs, and instructional priorities.

External Organizations and Contracted Services

Riverview Roots does not partner with an Education Management Organization (EMO) or contract with any external entity for comprehensive school management or educational programming. Professional development is primarily designed and led internally through the school’s teacher-powered leadership structure and instructional leadership roles, ensuring alignment with the school’s mission, curriculum, and student needs.

The organizational chart reflects the school's use of targeted contracted services that support operations, compliance, and specialized expertise as needed, including:

- Fiscal and accounting services
- Payroll and human resources support
- Licensed evaluator services (as needed)
- Specialized related services (e.g., occupational therapy, speech-language services)

When appropriate, the school may engage external professional learning providers for specialized training (e.g., structured literacy, MTSS, restorative practices), under the direction of the School Director and Board of Directors. All contracted providers are managed by the School Director and overseen by the Governing Board.

8.02 Contracted Organizations

Riverview Roots Elementary School anticipates contracting with specialized service providers, but does not intend to outsource school management or educational programming.

Roles of Management or Partner Organizations

Contracted organizations may provide the following services:

- **Fiscal and Accounting Services:** Budget management, financial reporting, audit preparation, and compliance support
- **Payroll and Human Resources Services:** Payroll processing, benefits administration, and HR compliance
- **Licensed Evaluator Services:** If the School Director is not serving in a full-time evaluative capacity during initial years, a DPI-licensed external evaluator (e.g., through a CESA or similar entity) may be contracted to conduct formal evaluations consistent with Wisconsin law
- **Related Services Providers:** Specialized student services required under IEPs or other support plans

All contracted service providers are managed internally by the School Director, with operational coordination handled by the Director of Operations to ensure timelines, deliverables, compliance, and service quality are met. These entities provide operational support only. Instructional leadership, curriculum decisions, and school culture remain the responsibility of Riverview Roots.

Priority Setting and Key Decision-Making

Decision-making authority is clearly defined:

- The Governing Board sets strategic direction, approves budgets and policies, and oversees school performance.

- The School Director has final authority over daily operations, personnel supervision, instructional implementation, and compliance.
- The Teacher Leadership Council provides structured advisory input on instructional and cultural matters, supporting collaboration while maintaining administrative clarity.

This structure balances shared leadership with clear lines of authority, reducing operational risk during the start-up phase.

Evaluation of Contracted Organizations

The Governing Board evaluates all contracted service providers through:

- Annual review of contract deliverables and performance expectations
- Monitoring of fiscal controls, compliance, and service quality
- Input from the School Director and Director of Operations regarding day-to-day performance, compliance, and service quality
- Board decisions regarding renewal, modification, or termination of contracts

8.03 Management Agreement

Riverview Roots Elementary School does not utilize a comprehensive management agreement with an EMO or similar organization.

As applicable, draft service agreements or memoranda of understanding for specialized contracted services (e.g., fiscal services, evaluator services, related services) will be developed and approved by the Governing Board prior to school opening and submitted to the authorizer upon request. These agreements are designed to support, not supplant, the school's educational model.

Section IX: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION

Board Member Name	Board Position	Competency	Term	Organization/ Affiliation
Melissa Grandi	Founding Board President	Curriculum & Instruction; Teacher Leadership; School Design & Community Engagement; Parent Perspective	Planning Year - 1 year	Elkhorn Area School District (4th Grade Teacher); Founder, Riverview Roots
Bart Kocha	Founding Board Secretary	Charter School Finance & Governance; Financial Oversight; Budgeting;	2-3 years	Illinois Network of Charter Schools Board of Directors

		Fiscal Controls		
Molly Souza	Founding Board Treasurer	Student Health & Wellness; Special Education & Student Supports; School Healthy Compliance; Parent Perspective	Planning Year - 1 year	Burlington Area School District (District Nurse); Children's Hospital Wisconsin (Registered Nurse)
Len Warzala	Board Member	Strategic Planning; Facilities; Environmental Stewardship; Community Partnerships	2-3 years	Kimball Electronics (Business Development Executive); Lyons Biodiversity Project (Founder); Kettle Moraine Land Trust (Board Member); Former School Board President
Paige Carrivou	Board Member	Speech-Language Pathology; Special Education Services; MTSS & Early Intervention; Parent Perspective	2-3 years	Stacked Therapies (Speech Language Pathologist); Former Burlington Area School District Board Member
Peter Smet	Advisory Board Member	Public School Administration; Finance; Governance & Compliance	Planning Year - 1 year	Retired Superintendent and Business Manager, Burlington Area School District
Mike Kelly	Advisory Board Member	Legal counsel; nonprofit and public-sector governance; contracts and risk management	Planning Year – 1 year	Attorney, Lloyd Phenicie Lynch Kelly Burlington, Wisconsin

The governing board of Roots Learning Collective, Inc., the nonprofit organization proposing to operate Riverview Roots Elementary School, was formed during the early planning phase by three founding members who initiated a community needs assessment, school design, and charter development work. These founders shared a commitment to establishing a nature-integrated, community-centered public charter school serving families in the Burlington/Lyons region.

As planning progressed, the Board intentionally expanded to include members with complementary expertise in public-school leadership, finance, mental health, environmental

stewardship, and nonprofit governance. The current Board reflects a balance of founding visionaries and experienced professionals with strong ties to the local community.

The Governing Board currently consists of five voting members, with a planned target size of 7–9 voting members as the school transitions from planning to governance. To support this transition, the Board is actively cultivating a pipeline of additional community members with expertise in education, finance, facilities, legal compliance, and nonprofit governance. Several individuals with relevant professional backgrounds are currently engaged in advisory or informal capacities and are expected to transition into formal governing roles prior to school opening, supporting board independence, continuity, and long-term sustainability.

The Board reflects the community and students the school intends to serve through:

- Representation from local educators, parents, and community leaders
- Expertise aligned to the school’s mission (education, wellness, environmental literacy)
- Strong knowledge of public-school finance, governance, and compliance

Two current Board members—Melissa Grandi and Molly Souza—are serving in governance roles during the planning phase and also intend to apply for employment at Riverview Roots Elementary once the school becomes operational. This dual role is temporary and limited to the pre-opening period.

Both individuals will transition off the Governing Board prior to any hiring decisions and before assuming paid employment. During this transition:

- Neither individual will participate in decisions related to their own hiring, supervision, evaluation, or compensation
- The Board will maintain independence from school operations
- Continuity of governance will be preserved through staggered terms and expanded membership

Advisory Board Members

Riverview Roots Elementary also benefits from the expertise of two non-voting Advisory Board Members who provide guidance and technical support during the planning year. Advisory Board Members do not hold fiduciary authority, voting power, or governance responsibilities. Their role is limited to providing professional expertise and counsel to the Governing Board and school leadership upon request.

Peter Smet, retired Superintendent and Business Manager of the Burlington Area School District, serves as an Advisory Board Member, offering guidance related to public school administration, budgeting, fiscal oversight, and governance compliance.

Mike Kelly, an attorney based in Burlington, Wisconsin, serves as an Advisory Board Member providing legal perspective related to nonprofit governance, charter school compliance, contracts, and risk management. Mr. Kelly does not serve as retained legal counsel unless formally engaged under a separate agreement.

The inclusion of Advisory Board Members allows Riverview Roots to access specialized expertise while maintaining clear lines of authority, board independence, and accountability.

9.03 Governance Structure

Riverview Roots Elementary School will operate under a nonprofit public charter school governance model. The governing board holds full legal, fiduciary, and strategic authority over the school, including oversight of academic performance, financial health, organizational sustainability, and compliance with the charter contract.

The board delegates day-to-day operations to the School Director while retaining responsibility for:

- Mission and vision stewardship
- Policy adoption
- Strategic planning
- Accountability to the authorizer

This structure maintains a clear separation between governance and management, consistent with best practices in public charter oversight.

Corrective Action and Accountability

If the school fails to meet academic, financial, or operational performance standards, the board will initiate a structured corrective action process. This includes:

- Reviewing relevant performance data
- Identifying root causes
- Requiring a written improvement plan with clear benchmarks and timelines
- Monitoring progress through regular reporting

If necessary, the board may require additional supports or make leadership changes. The board will maintain communication with the Office of Educational Opportunity throughout any remediation process.

Board Policy Development and Adoption

Board policies will be developed through a transparent and structured process. Policies may be proposed by board committees, the School Director, or the full board. Draft policies will be

reviewed for legal compliance and mission alignment prior to adoption at publicly noticed meetings.

All policies will be compiled in a board policy manual and reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure relevance and compliance.

Democratic Management and Family Engagement

The board embraces principles of democratic management consistent with Wis. Stat. §118.40(1m)(b)6, including transparency, shared responsibility, and meaningful family engagement. Families will have opportunities for input through:

- Public comment at board meetings
- Surveys and listening sessions
- Advisory committees and school-wide feedback processes

As board membership evolves, the board will continue to seek members who reflect the demographics, languages, and lived experiences of the school community.

9.04 Board Meetings and Compliance with Open Meetings Law

The governing board will begin holding formal, publicly noticed meetings in compliance with Wisconsin Open Meetings and Open Records laws upon receiving conditional authorization to proceed or upon reaching a key operational milestone such as securing a facility or hiring school leadership. All governance actions will occur in open session with agendas, minutes, and records maintained in accordance with state law.

9.05 Conflicts of Interest and Mitigation

No current board member has a financial, business, or property interest that presents a material conflict of interest. The board will adopt a formal Conflict of Interest Policy requiring annual disclosure and immediate reporting of potential conflicts. Any member with a conflict will recuse themselves from discussion and voting, with such recusals documented in meeting minutes.

9.06 Board Training and Ongoing Development

Board training will begin upon appointment and continue annually. All board members are required to participate in governance training and professional development aligned to their fiduciary and oversight responsibilities. Training includes:

- Orientation: Charter law, governance roles, bylaws, fiduciary duties, Open Meetings and Open Records compliance, and the charter contract

- Year One Training: Academic oversight, financial monitoring, restorative and whole-child practices, risk management, and strategic planning
- Ongoing Training: Updates to charter law and DPI requirements; equity and inclusion; environmental education aligned to the school’s mission

In addition to internally coordinated training, the board will participate in authorizer- and network-provided training and support, including:

- Governance and compliance training offered by the Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO)
- Board development, charter finance, and operational training provided through the Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS)

Participation in required training is mandatory for all board members. Training expectations and timelines will evolve as the school grows and governance needs expand.

9.07 Process for Parent or Student Objections

Concerns are first addressed at the school level. If unresolved, parents or students may submit a written concern to the governing board. The board will acknowledge receipt, review the issue, and determine appropriate next steps, which may include referral to administration or placement on a public meeting agenda. This process will be clearly outlined in the family handbook.

9.08 Board Monitoring Tools

The board will use a dashboard-based monitoring system (e.g., Board on Track or a custom dashboard) to track academic performance, financial health, enrollment, attendance, discipline data, and progress toward mission-aligned goals. Associated costs will be reflected in the school’s budget.

9.09 Board Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

Appendix E provides board bylaws and articles of incorporation for Roots Learning Collective, Inc.

Section X: STAFFING PLANS, HIRING MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION

10.01 Planning Year Personnel and Funding Sources

During the planning year between authorization and school opening, Riverview Roots Elementary School will operate with a small, focused leadership and founding team responsible for pre-opening planning, systems development, and launch readiness.

Planning-Year Personnel

Founding School Director (Part-Time; Transitioning to Full-Time)

The Founding Director will lead all pre-opening work and ensure readiness for school opening. Responsibilities include:

- Charter compliance and reporting
- Curriculum finalization and instructional planning
- Family engagement and student recruitment
- Operational readiness, facilities preparation, and safety planning
- Design of MTSS and student support systems
- Staffing, onboarding, and professional development planning

Funding Sources: CSP Start-Up Grant (if awarded), WRCCS design-year stipend, and private donations.

Founding Team Members (Future Founding Staff – Volunteer and Limited Planning Stipends)

Several founding team members are educators and parents of future Riverview Roots students. During the planning year, they will contribute to:

- Curriculum development
- Outdoor and environmental education planning
- Family outreach and community engagement

These individuals are expected to become founding staff during the first year of operation, providing continuity and strong ownership of the school's mission.

Funding Sources: CSP Start-Up Grant, WRCCS stipends, and private donations.

Administrative Assistant / Enrollment Coordinator (Part-Time; Late Planning Year)

This role will support enrollment systems, family communication, documentation, and operational setup.

Funding Sources: CSP Start-Up Grant and private fundraising.

Board of Directors (Volunteer)

Board members provide governance, strategic oversight, and fiscal stewardship and are not compensated.

External Consultants (As Needed)

Short-term consultants may be used for charter finance, special education compliance, HR systems development, and facilities and safety planning.

Funding Sources: CSP Start-Up Grant and private fundraising.

10.02 Strategy for Recruiting, Retaining, and Hiring Licensed Mission-Aligned Staff

Riverview Roots will recruit educators who align with the school’s mission and instructional priorities, including nature-integrated learning, structured literacy, trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive teaching, and strong family partnership.

Recruitment Strategy

- Posting positions through WECAN, CESA job boards, and university career centers
- Partnerships with teacher preparation programs (e.g., UW–Whitewater, UW–Parkside, UW–Milwaukee)
- Outreach through outdoor education networks, bilingual educator groups, and community organizations
- Targeted recruitment of educators with special education and EL licensure
- Leveraging founding team and board networks
- Community information sessions and outreach events

Retention Strategy

Retention is grounded in teacher voice, collaboration, and professional sustainability. Teachers will experience:

- Meaningful input into instructional and schoolwide decisions
- Biweekly collaborative meetings with leadership
- Small class sizes and low student-to-teacher ratios
- Daily common planning time
- Coaching and leadership pathways
- A visible and engaged school leader who supports classrooms directly
- A trauma-informed, relationship-centered school culture
- Workload structures designed to support wellbeing and long-term commitment

Riverview Roots views teacher voice and professional trust as core retention strategies.

Compliance

All instructional staff will hold a valid DPI license or permit in accordance with Wis. Stat. §118.40(1m)(b)7. Criminal background checks and eligibility verification will be completed for all hires.

10.03 Support for Newly Certified or Early-Career Teachers

If Riverview Roots hires newly certified teachers, teachers with conditional or emergency licenses, or those with fewer than three years of experience, the school will implement a structured induction program that includes:

- Assignment of a mentor teacher with weekly coaching check-ins
- Biweekly meetings with the School Director
- Protected co-planning time
- Reduced non-instructional duties during the first year
- Targeted professional development in structured literacy, SEL/trauma-informed practices, and outdoor education
- Participation in a New Teacher Learning Community embedded within PLC time

The School Director's daily classroom presence further supports new educators through modeling, co-teaching, and responsive coaching.

10.04 Salary Ranges and Employee Benefits

Riverview Roots Elementary School establishes salary ranges that are competitive, equitable, and aligned with Wisconsin public charter school norms, while reflecting the school's start-up size and phased enrollment model.

- **Classroom Teachers (Full-Time, Licensed):** Minimum \$50,000
- **Classroom Teachers (Part-Time):** Prorated based on full-time equivalent (FTE)
- **Special Education Teachers (Licensed):** Minimum \$50,000
- **Outdoor Education / Physical Education Teacher (Licensed):** Minimum \$50,000
- **School Director:** \$80,000–\$95,000 (full-time equivalent; anticipated to be hired part-time during the start-up phase with compensation prorated based on FTE)
- **Director of Operations:** \$70,000–\$80,000 (full-time equivalent; anticipated to be hired part-time during the start-up phase with compensation prorated based on FTE)
- **Administrative Assistant:** \$40,000–\$48,000
- **Support Staff:** \$15–\$22 per hour

Final salary placement and FTE status will be based on enrollment, operational needs, and fiscal capacity, and will be reviewed and approved by the Governing Board.

Benefits

- Health, dental, and vision insurance (full-time staff)
- PTO and sick leave
- Professional development stipends
- Tuition reimbursement for high-need licensure areas (EL, SPED)
- Possible participation in WRS depending on funding structure

Incentives

- Signing bonuses for hard-to-fill positions (SPED, EL)
- Retention stipends after Years 1 and 3
- Teacher leadership opportunities in literacy, outdoor education, SEL, and family engagement

10.05 Teacher Support, Development, and Evaluation

Ongoing Support and Professional Development

Teachers will be supported through:

- Weekly PLCs by grade band or content area
- Quarterly full-day professional development sessions
- Instructional coaching cycles with the School Director
- Ongoing training in structured literacy, SEL, trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive teaching, and environmental education integration

The School Director will be highly visible and accessible, regularly present in classrooms, common spaces, and available to step into instructional roles when needed.

Evaluation

Teacher evaluation will comply with Wis. Stat. §115.415 and include:

- Formal and informal observations
- Teacher self-reflection aligned to the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness framework
- Student learning evidence
- Classroom practice rubrics
- Contributions to school culture and collaboration

The School Director (or a trained designee) is responsible for conducting all formal evaluations.

10.06 Relationship Between School and Employees

All Riverview Roots employees will be at-will. Annual employment letters will outline role responsibilities, compensation, schedule, and expectations but do not constitute long-term employment contracts.

Hiring Procedures

- Job posting and recruitment
- Application screening and interviews
- Demonstration lesson when applicable

- Reference and background checks
- Licensure verification

Dismissal Procedures

- Documentation of concerns
- Coaching and support plans
- Monitoring period with feedback
- Determination by the School Director, with board oversight as appropriate

10.07 Unsatisfactory Teacher Performance and Teacher Changes/Turnover

When performance concerns arise, the school will use a structured improvement process that includes:

- Identification of concerns
- Collaborative improvement planning with coaching support
- Monitoring and feedback
- Determination based on progress and student needs

To mitigate the impact of turnover, the school will:

- Maintain an active candidate pool
- Utilize licensed substitute teachers
- Deploy leadership support when needed
- Leverage co-teaching and small-group instructional structures

10.08 Community of Learning and Collaboration

The School Director will foster a collaborative and mission-driven professional culture through:

- Biweekly staff circles for reflection and shared problem-solving
- Weekly PLCs focused on instructional improvement
- Consistent communication and teacher voice
- Leadership grounded in presence, trust, and shared ownership
- Teacher leadership pathways in curriculum, outdoor education, Spanish integration, and SEL

These structures ensure Riverview Roots is a joyful, collaborative, and professionally supportive environment where educators feel valued and connected to the school's mission.

Section XI: FACILITIES

11.01 Facilities Requirements

Riverview Roots Elementary School is committed to securing a facility that is safe, functional, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the school's mission of nature-integrated, hands-on, community-centered learning. The facility plan is intentionally conservative in terms of required space and build-out, while also allowing for modest growth as the school expands from grades 4K–3 at opening through grade 5.

At launch, Riverview Roots anticipates serving approximately 120 students, requiring:

- 7–8 general education classrooms, each approximately 600–800 square feet, designed to support flexible instructional models including whole-group instruction, small-group work, structured literacy routines, and hands-on, project-based learning
- Classroom configurations that support target class sizes of 20-25 students

In addition to classrooms, the facility must include the following essential shared spaces:

- One small multipurpose room used for lunch, indoor recess, physical education during inclement weather, assemblies, and community gatherings
- One to two small rooms for special education services, evaluations, and intervention groups
- Main office and administrative workspace for the School Director and operations staff
- Designated health room
- Storage and shared workspace for instructional materials and supplies

An overall building size of approximately 25,000–35,000 square feet is sufficient to meet the school's instructional and operational needs for the elementary grades served, while allowing flexibility for future enrollment growth within the initial charter term.

11.02 Unique Facility Needs

Riverview Roots integrates daily outdoor learning as a core instructional practice. As a result, the school prioritizes access to safe, accessible outdoor space rather than specialized or costly built features.

The facility must include:

- A simple playground
- A grass field or open play area
- Access to natural outdoor space, such as trees, open land, or a lightly wooded area

These features support outdoor science instruction, environmental literacy, physical movement, and unstructured play. Instruction will rely on portable outdoor materials and basic equipment,

allowing high-quality outdoor learning without extensive construction or specialized infrastructure.

Specialty classrooms are not required for initial operation. Art, Spanish, and enrichment programming can be delivered within general education classrooms or the multipurpose space. Library and media needs will be met through classroom libraries and a mobile library model, eliminating the need for a dedicated library/media center during early years.

This flexible, cost-effective approach ensures students receive a robust educational experience while minimizing facility-related financial risk.

11.03 Specialty Classroom Needs

Riverview Roots does not require specialized science laboratories, art studios, computer labs, or performance spaces to implement its educational model effectively. Instead, the school requires the following limited specialty spaces:

- Special Education / Student Support Room – One small room (approximately 100–200 square feet) to support confidential evaluations, therapy services, and small-group instruction.
- Flexible Multi-Use Space – A multipurpose room to accommodate art activities, Spanish instruction, enrichment programming, indoor movement, family events, and community gatherings.
- Outdoor Education Space – Existing green space is sufficient; no permanent outdoor structures are required for initial operation.
- Library / Media Access – Classroom libraries and a mobile library system meet student needs without a dedicated library space.

This conservative facilities approach reduces operational costs while fully supporting high-quality instruction, student services, and whole-child learning.

11.04 Potential Facilities and Proposed Arrangements

Preferred Option:

The former Lyons Center Elementary School is the school's preferred and most mission-aligned facility. The building supports small class sizes, includes existing classrooms and shared spaces, and offers extensive green space suitable for daily outdoor learning. Its location within the Lyons community aligns closely with the school's commitment to place-based education and community connection.

While Lyons Center represents a strong long-term opportunity, no lease or purchase agreement has been executed, and the board is proceeding cautiously to ensure any arrangement is financially sustainable and aligned with long-term stability.

Alternative Options:

If Lyons Center cannot be secured, Riverview Roots will pursue a modest leased facility within the community that meets DPI occupancy, safety, and health requirements and accommodates the school's limited space needs at launch.

Conflicts of Interest and Mitigation

There are no known conflicts of interest between board members or school leadership and any potential facility owners. Should a real or perceived conflict arise, the school will:

- Require recusal of the involved individual(s)
- Document all actions in board minutes
- Obtain independent legal review prior to approval of any facility agreement

Proof of Facility Commitment and Compliance

At this time, Riverview Roots does not hold a facility or MOU. Proof of commitment will be provided once a facility is secured. The school understands that a viable, compliant facility must be identified prior to execution of the charter contract.

All facilities under consideration will comply with applicable state and local health, safety, and occupancy requirements.

Facility Acquisition Timeline

Riverview Roots will follow a conservative and responsible facility acquisition timeline:

- Spring–Summer 2026: Finalize lease or purchase agreement
- Fall 2026: Health, safety, and occupancy inspections; preparation for use
- Winter–Spring 2027: Classroom setup, furnishing, and outdoor materials preparation
- Summer 2027: Final walkthroughs, staff orientation, and family tours

A compliant facility will be secured well in advance of student enrollment and school opening.

Section XII: TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY, AND FOOD SERVICE

12.01 Transportation

Riverview Roots Elementary School recognizes that equitable access to transportation is essential to student enrollment and attendance and is actively evaluating multiple transportation options in compliance with Wisconsin law.

Daily Transportation

Riverview Roots has not yet finalized its transportation model and is intentionally maintaining flexibility during the planning phase. Transportation options under consideration include:

- Transportation provided by resident school districts for eligible students, consistent with applicable Wisconsin statutes
- Contracted transportation services
- School-operated transportation (e.g., purchase or lease of a school bus)
- Family-provided transportation supported by school-facilitated coordination

Final transportation decisions will be based on student need, enrollment patterns, cost feasibility, safety considerations, and legal requirements. The school will finalize its transportation plan prior to opening and communicate clearly with families regarding eligibility, routes, and procedures.

Students with Disabilities

Transportation services for students with disabilities will be provided in accordance with IDEA and each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Riverview Roots will coordinate with resident school districts and/or transportation providers to ensure that transportation identified as a related service is delivered safely and consistently.

Students Experiencing Homelessness

In compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Riverview Roots will ensure transportation access for students experiencing homelessness. The school will collaborate with resident districts and community partners to remove transportation barriers for eligible students.

Transportation Planning and Access Supports

To ensure equitable access regardless of the final transportation model, Riverview Roots will:

- Conduct a family transportation needs assessment prior to enrollment
- Evaluate transportation options based on geography, student needs, and cost
- Communicate clearly with families as transportation plans are finalized

Field Trips and Special Events

Transportation for field trips, outdoor learning experiences, and special events will be provided through district transportation when applicable, contracted services, or school-approved transportation arrangements. All transportation will comply with safety and supervision requirements, and associated costs will be reflected in the school's budget.

12.02 Health Services and Safety Plan

Riverview Roots Elementary School is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. The school's health and safety plan complies with all applicable federal, state, county, and local laws and regulations and reflects best practices in student physical health, mental health, and school safety.

School Health Services

Riverview Roots will provide school health services under the guidance of a licensed Registered Nurse (RN). The school nurse will be aligned with professional standards and guidance from the Wisconsin Association of School Nurses (WASN) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practices in school health services.

Health services will include:

- Management of student health records and immunization compliance
- Administration of medications according to physician orders and state regulations
- Development and implementation of individual health plans (IHPs) as needed
- Coordination of care for students with chronic health conditions
- Staff training related to health protocols and emergency response

A designated health room will be maintained within the facility to support student health needs during the school day.

Mental Health and Student Wellness

Riverview Roots recognizes the mental health needs within the school community and is committed to a multidisciplinary, prevention-focused approach to student wellness. The school will support student mental health through:

- Trauma-informed practices embedded in daily classroom routines
- Collaboration among educators, the school nurse, student support personnel, and families
- Early identification of social-emotional or behavioral concerns
- Referral to community-based mental health providers when appropriate

This approach emphasizes relationship-based support, early intervention, and coordinated care to promote student wellbeing and safety.

School Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The school will implement a comprehensive School Safety and Emergency Response Plan, which will include procedures for:

- Fire, severe weather, lockdowns, and evacuation
- Medical emergencies

- Crisis response and family reunification

Safety drills will be conducted in accordance with state requirements. The school will coordinate with local emergency responders and ensure staff are trained in emergency protocols.

To strengthen preparedness and compliance, Riverview Roots anticipates designating a staff member to complete School Safety Coordinator training and certification, ensuring alignment with statewide school safety standards and access to current risk-assessment tools and guidance.

Facility and Property Safety

Facility safety measures will include:

- Compliance with building codes, fire inspections, and occupancy requirements
- Regular safety inspections of indoor and outdoor learning spaces
- Secure storage of hazardous materials
- Maintenance procedures to ensure a clean, safe environment

All safety-related procedures and responsibilities will be documented and reviewed regularly.

Continuous Improvement and Oversight

Health and safety practices will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect:

- Changes in law or regulation
- Guidance from public health agencies
- School-based data and incident reviews

The governing board will provide oversight of health and safety systems to ensure ongoing compliance and continuous improvement.

12.04 Food Services

Riverview Roots Elementary School is actively evaluating food service options for its initial year of operation and has intentionally not yet finalized a single service model. The school is committed to ensuring that no student is denied access to food due to financial or logistical barriers and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local nutrition and food safety requirements.

Year One Planning and Equity Commitments

During the planning phase, Riverview Roots is considering multiple food service models, including:

- A bring-your-own cold lunch model, with the school providing meals to students who are unable to bring lunch

- Contracted food service through a qualified vendor
- A school-operated food service program, if the facility includes a compliant commercial kitchen and all regulatory requirements can be met

Final decisions regarding food service will be informed by:

- Community input sessions and family engagement meetings
- Enrollment projections and identified student needs
- Facility capacity and regulatory feasibility
- Financial sustainability and staffing considerations

Regardless of the model selected, Riverview Roots will ensure that students who require meal support receive access to nutritious food in a respectful and confidential manner.

Potential Food Service Partnerships

As part of its exploration process, Riverview Roots has reviewed food service providers whose values align with the school's mission. One potential partner under consideration is Taher, Inc., which is known for:

- Providing fresh, nutritious, and balanced meals
- Emphasizing whole grains, lean proteins, and fresh produce
- Implementing sustainability practices, including waste reduction and composting
- Partnering with schools to source ingredients from local farms, supporting both student food literacy and the local economy

No vendor has been selected at this time, and the school is not committed to a specific provider.

Compliance and Oversight

Any food service model implemented by Riverview Roots will:

- Meet all USDA, DPI, county, and local health department requirements
- Follow required food safety, handling, and sanitation standards
- Be reflected accurately in the school's operating budget
- Be reviewed and approved by the governing board prior to implementation

Decision Timeline

Riverview Roots will finalize its food service model no later than six months prior to school opening, following community input sessions, facility readiness assessments, and budget review. Final decisions will be communicated to families with sufficient time to plan and will be reflected in the school's operating budget.

Section XIII: FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

13.01 Financial Management Roles and Expertise

Riverview Roots Elementary School will manage its financial planning and operations through a combination of experienced governance oversight, school leadership, and professional financial expertise during both the pre-planning year and operational years. This layered approach ensures fiscal responsibility, transparency, and compliance appropriate for a start-up public charter school.

Pre-Planning Year Financial Management

During the pre-planning year, financial responsibilities will be managed collaboratively by:

- *School Director (Part-Time)*
The School Director is responsible for coordinating budget development, aligning financial planning with the instructional and operational model, monitoring expenditures, ensuring grant compliance, and serving as the primary liaison to financial service providers. The School Director works closely with the Governing Board to ensure fiscal decisions support programmatic priorities and long-term sustainability.
- *Governing Board Treasurer and Finance Committee*
The Governing Board includes members with experience in public education finance and nonprofit oversight. A retired district superintendent/business manager serves in an advisory capacity to the school and Finance Committee, providing guidance on school finance, budgeting practices, and start-up planning, but does not hold formal board authority. The Finance Committee reviews budgets, monitors cash flow, reviews financial reports, and ensures internal fiscal controls are in place.
- *External Financial and Accounting Expertise (Planning Phase)*
Riverview Roots has worked closely with Katie Wise, Chief Operating Officer at GT3 Group LLC, who has provided professional support in developing the school's five-year budget projections and cash flow planning. This collaboration has strengthened the school's financial assumptions and ensured conservative, realistic budgeting aligned with Wisconsin funding structures. The school may contract with GT3 Group LLC or a comparable charter-experienced financial professional if additional internal or external capacity is needed.

Operational Years Financial Management

Once operational, Riverview Roots' financial management structure will include:

- Ongoing fiscal oversight by the Governing Board and Finance Committee
- Day-to-day financial coordination by the School Director

- Continued use of professional accounting, payroll, and audit services to ensure accuracy, transparency, and compliance

This structure balances internal accountability with appropriate external expertise, reducing risk while maintaining fiscal control within the school.

Use of CESA and External Financial Support Services (Under Consideration)

Riverview Roots is exploring the use of CESA 6 and/or a charter-experienced financial services provider to support selected business office and operational functions during the planning year and early operational years. These services are intended to strengthen financial accuracy, compliance, and internal controls while allowing the school to maintain lean internal staffing during start-up.

If utilized, external financial support services may include:

- Payroll processing and benefits administration
- Accounting and financial reporting
- Budget monitoring and cash-flow management support
- Audit preparation and compliance documentation
- Human resources systems and onboarding support

Riverview Roots has worked with Katie Wise, Chief Operating Officer at GT3 Group LLC, during the planning phase to support development of the school's five-year budget and financial projections. The school may contract with GT3 Group LLC or a comparable charter-experienced financial services provider if CESA services are not utilized or if additional capacity is needed.

Any agreement with CESA 6, GT3 Group LLC, or another external provider would be strictly service-based. All fiscal decision-making authority would remain with the School Director and Governing Board. Service agreements would be reviewed and approved by the Board and fully reflected in the school's operating budget. External providers would not hold governance authority or control over school operations.

13.02 Capital Needs and Pre-Opening Funding

Riverview Roots anticipates capital needs associated with pre-opening activities and the planned purchase and rehabilitation of the former Lyons school building. These needs are aligned with a conservative facilities strategy focused on long-term community benefit and fiscal sustainability.

Sources of Pre-Opening and Capital Funding

Capital required prior to opening and during the facilities acquisition phase will be obtained through a combination of:

- Federal Charter School Program (CSP) Start-Up Grant funding, if awarded

- Planning and design-year stipends and technical assistance
- Private philanthropic contributions and community fundraising
- Cash reserves generated through early fundraising efforts

Cash Flow and Short-Term Financing

As with many start-up charter schools, Riverview Roots may require short-term cash-flow support during the planning year or early operational period due to timing differences between expenditures and revenue receipts. If needed, the Governing Board may approve a conservative line of credit with a local financial institution or charter-supportive lender. Any such instrument would be used solely for short-term cash-flow management and structured to minimize financial risk.

13.03 Five-Year Budget and Cash Flow Projections

Riverview Roots has submitted detailed revenue and expenditure budgets for the planning year and first five years of operation, along with projected cash-flow statements, using the required OEO templates.

Budget Assumptions and Alignment

The five-year budget reflects:

- A phased enrollment model beginning with grades 4K–3 and expanding through grade 5
- Small class sizes and a lean staffing structure
- Conservative assumptions for facilities, transportation, and administrative costs
- Strategic use of start-up and philanthropic funds during early years
- Alignment with the school’s instructional model, including structured literacy, student supports, outdoor education, and teacher collaboration

Revenue projections are based on Wisconsin per-pupil allocations, supplemented by start-up grants and philanthropic contributions in the initial years. Expenditures prioritize instructional staffing, student services, and essential operations.

13.04 Fundraising Plan Beyond Per-Pupil Revenue

Riverview Roots recognizes that per-pupil revenue alone may not fully support start-up costs, capital needs, and early program development. The school has developed a diversified fundraising strategy to supplement public funding while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Committed and Anticipated Philanthropic Support

Riverview Roots Elementary has secured early philanthropic commitments that strengthen both planning-year capacity and long-term sustainability. A committed donor, Sherry Powers, is

providing an initial \$10,000 contribution during the planning year and has pledged \$20,000 annually once the school is operational to support general school operations and program needs.

In addition, a lead donor has pledged \$125,000 toward the acquisition of the school facility and is actively engaging additional philanthropic partners to support the purchase of the building. The lead donor and affiliated partners are members of the Lyons Biodiversity Project, which is supporting the school as part of a broader community effort to rehabilitate and preserve the Lyons campus and surrounding natural and community assets.

The anticipated ownership and lease structure is intended to provide Riverview Roots with long-term facility stability at a minimal cost. Riverview Roots has developed a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with philanthropic partners expressing intent to lease the school facility to Riverview Roots for \$1 per year as an in-kind contribution. This draft MOU reflects shared expectations regarding facility use and long-term support but has not yet been formally executed. Any final lease agreement, including nominal or in-kind lease terms, will be formally documented, reviewed and approved by the Governing Board, and fully reflected in the school's financial statements prior to occupancy.

While the lead donor and affiliated partners are also involved in the Lyons Biodiversity Project, all philanthropic contributions and facility arrangements related to Riverview Roots are restricted exclusively to school purposes. The school does not assume responsibility for broader community redevelopment efforts, and no school funds will be used for non-school activities. All agreements will be structured to ensure clear separation, fiscal transparency, and full compliance with nonprofit and charter school requirements.

Ongoing Fundraising Strategies

Additional fundraising sources will include:

- Federal and state charter support grants
- Community and founding-family campaigns
- Grants aligned with environmental education, wellness, and rural innovation
- Partnerships with local businesses and foundations

The Governing Board will oversee all fundraising activities to ensure transparency, legal compliance, and alignment with nonprofit regulations and the school's mission.

Section XIV: EXISTING OPERATORS OR CMO'S PLANNED GROWTH

N/A

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Appendices	
Appendix A	Community Input Session Sign In
Appendix B	Proposed Discipline Policy
Appendix C	Organization Chart
Appendix D	Board Member Resumes
Appendix E	Board Bylaws
Appendix F	Articles of Incorporation

SIGN IN SHEET



NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Jackie Hernandez		
Peggy Wellengal		
Evan Wellengal		
Brittany Ancely Therngate		
Josiah Ancely Therngate		
Bart Kacha		
Bob Hintz		
Jenny Hille		

SIGN IN SHEET



NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Gloria Fellen		
Neil Nelson		
Aisa Wagner		
Bob Grandi		
Jennifer Houli		

Riverview Roots Elementary School

Discipline Policy

Roots Learning Collective, Inc.

I. Introduction & Purpose

The purpose of Riverview Roots Elementary's Discipline Policy is to create and maintain a safe, nurturing, inclusive, and positive learning environment where all children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. This policy outlines the expectations, supports, procedures, and consequences designed to help students learn appropriate behaviors, repair harm when it occurs, and develop strong social-emotional skills.

The policy is grounded in the school's mission to offer a nature-integrated, community-centered, and child-centered learning environment. Discipline at Riverview Roots is understood as an extension of teaching—not punishment—and every incident is treated as a learning opportunity.

This policy fulfills the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes §118.40, including procedures for disciplining students, early involvement of parents, and maintaining a positive educational environment conducive to learning. It reflects the school's commitment to restorative practices, community building, nature-based learning, and whole-child development.

II. Philosophy of Student Behavior & Discipline

Riverview Roots Elementary believes that:

- Children learn best through relationships and support, not fear or exclusion.
- Restorative practices repair harm, strengthen classroom community, and promote accountability.
- Clear expectations and routines help students feel safe and ready to learn.
- Behavior is communication, especially for young children developing self-regulation skills.
- Families are essential partners in helping students succeed.
- Discipline must be fair, consistent, anti-biased, and developmentally appropriate.

The school commits to discipline practices that:

- Preserve student dignity
- Prioritize safety
- Maintain a learning environment conducive to instruction
- Prevent future harm
- Teach self-regulation, communication, and empathy

- Strengthen relationships
- Partner meaningfully with families

The philosophy guiding Riverview Roots' discipline system is grounded in restorative justice, positive behavior supports, and developmentally appropriate expectations.

III. Schoolwide Behavior Expectations

Riverview Roots uses four schoolwide expectations that apply across classrooms, outdoor learning spaces, and all school activities:

1. Care for Yourself – Safety, honesty, emotional regulation, perseverance
2. Care for Others – Kindness, empathy, respectful communication, anti-bullying behavior
3. Care for Our Environment and Community – Stewardship of nature, materials, and shared spaces
4. Care for Learning – Participation, focus, following directions, supporting others' learning

Expectations are introduced at the start of the school year and reinforced through modeling, visual supports, role-play, class meetings, and social-emotional instruction. Consistent expectations across settings promote clarity and predictability for students.

IV. Restorative Practices Framework

Restorative practices form the foundation of Riverview Roots' discipline approach. Proactive strategies include daily morning meetings, class circles, collaborative norm-setting, and intentional SEL instruction. These practices build trust, belonging, and responsibility.

When harm occurs, responsive restorative practices help students reflect, repair relationships, and prevent recurrence. Restorative conversations and circles are guided by developmentally appropriate prompts, including:

- What happened?
- Who was impacted and how?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm?
- How can this be prevented in the future?

In more significant situations, restorative conferences may involve families and support staff. After any suspension or significant removal, a re-entry circle is conducted to support the student's return and reinforce belonging.

V. Progressive Discipline Approach

Riverview Roots uses a progressive, tiered approach to discipline that prioritizes instruction and connection over exclusion.

Universal responses may include redirection, reteaching expectations, reflection, logical consequences, seating adjustments, and communication with families.

Targeted supports may include check-ins/check-outs, behavior-support plans, small-group SEL instruction, restorative circles, and increased adult mentoring.

Intensive interventions may include temporary classroom exclusion, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension when safety is compromised or disruption persists despite documented interventions. Expulsion is considered only as a last resort.

At every level, the goal is learning, reflection, and restoration—not punishment.

VI. Behaviors That May Warrant Suspension or Expulsion

The following behaviors may result in suspension or expulsion depending on severity, frequency, and context:

A. Safety-Related Infractions

- Possession of a weapon
- Physical assault or intent to harm
- Threats of violence
- Use or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol

B. Serious Misconduct

- Significant destruction of property
- Severe or repeated bullying or harassment
- Chronic disruption despite interventions
- Theft
- Sexual harassment or misconduct

The school considers age, developmental level, disability status, and intent in all decisions and incorporates restorative components whenever possible.

VII. Due Process & Student Rights

When a student is subject to classroom exclusion (removal from instruction), the student is informed of the reason and parents are notified the same day.

For suspensions, families receive written notice and an opportunity to participate in a conference. Students are given the opportunity to share their perspective before decisions are made.

If expulsion is considered, families receive written notice of the hearing, the right to representation, and a written decision following the hearing. All actions comply with Wisconsin law and procedural safeguards.

VII-A. Authority to Administer Discipline

To ensure consistency and legal compliance, Riverview Roots identifies the following authority:

- Classroom Exclusion: Licensed classroom teacher or School Director (or designee)
- Suspension (in-school or out-of-school): School Director (or designee) only
- Expulsion: Board of Directors (or appointed hearing officer)
- Emergency Expulsion: School Director (or designee) only

The \ Student Services supports compliance, intervention planning, manifestation determinations, and re-entry coordination.

VII-B. Emergency Expulsion Procedures

Emergency expulsion is used only when a student's presence poses an immediate safety threat. When issued, the school will:

1. Provide same-day notice to parents/guardians
2. Issue written notice describing the incident and rights
3. Convene a prompt review meeting with the School Director and Director of Student Services
4. Ensure full compliance with IDEA and Section 504, including continuation of services when required

VII-C. Appeal and Review Procedures

- Classroom Exclusion: Review meeting available with teacher and School Director
- Suspension: Review conference available with School Director and Director of Student Services
- Expulsion: Formal hearing with Board of Directors; written decision issued

- Emergency Expulsion: Expedited review meeting available upon request

VIII. Students With Disabilities

Riverview Roots complies fully with IDEA, Section 504, and ADA. When discipline involves a student with a disability, the school conducts manifestation determinations, functional behavioral assessments, and behavior intervention planning as required. Educational services continue during removals when legally required.

IX. Parent/Guardian Engagement

Families are essential partners. Parents are contacted early when concerns arise and invited to restorative conversations and conferences. Families receive the discipline policy at enrollment and review the annual Family–School–Student Compact.

X. Addressing Disproportionality in Discipline

Discipline data is reviewed monthly and disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, language status, and socioeconomic status. The school provides ongoing staff training in implicit bias, restorative practices, and culturally responsive teaching. Policies are adjusted as needed to promote equitable outcomes.

XI. Policy Review and Community Involvement

The discipline policy is reviewed annually with input from staff, families, students (age-appropriate), leadership, the Board of Directors, and community partners. Updates are published in the Student & Family Handbook and on the school website.

XII. Communication, Training & Documentation

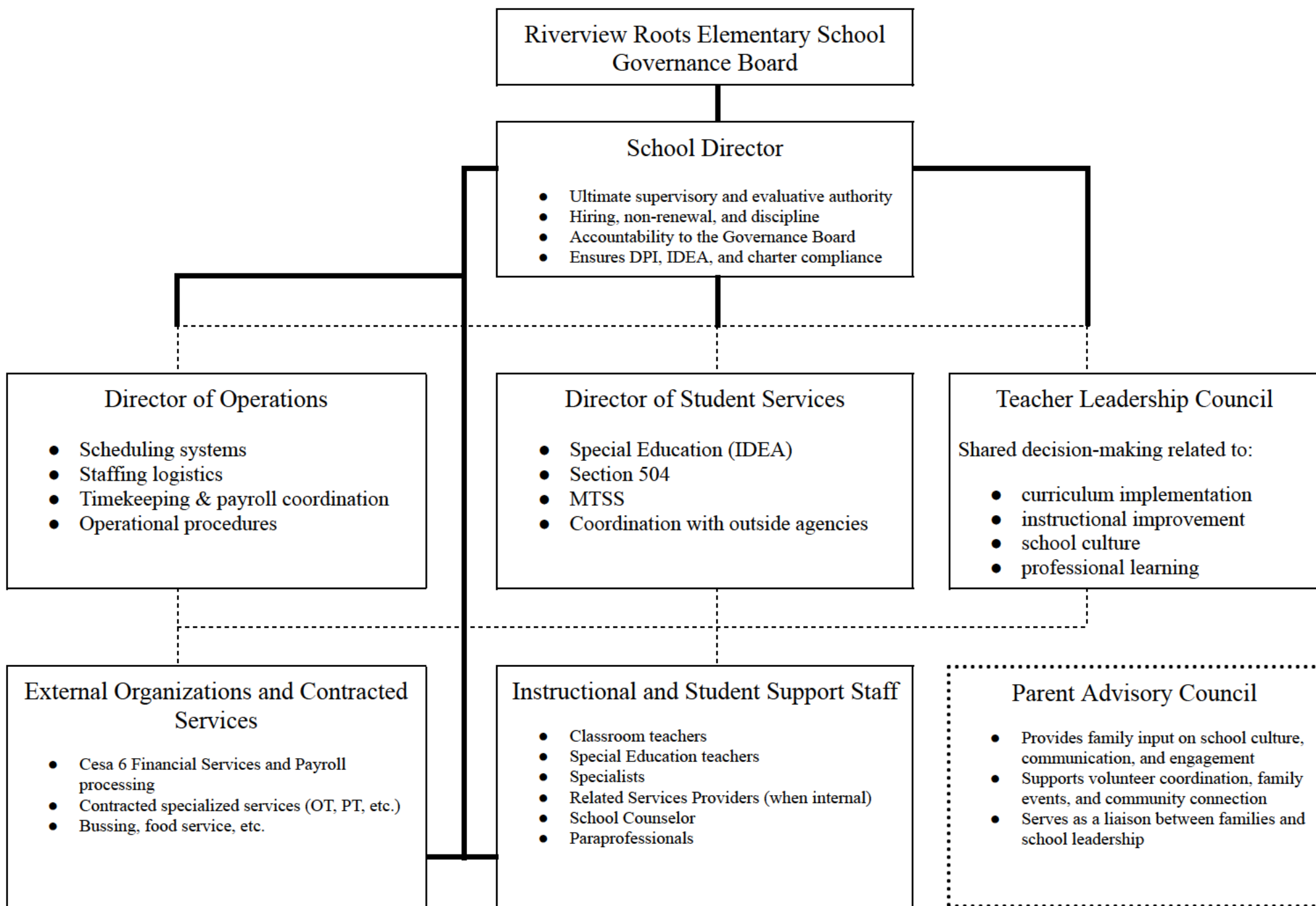
All staff receive annual training in restorative practices, de-escalation, behavior supports, and legal requirements. Incidents are documented consistently, data is reviewed regularly, and families are informed of any substantive updates to the policy.

XIII. Family–School–Student Contract

Each year, Riverview Roots asks families, students (when developmentally appropriate), and staff to sign a contract outlining shared commitments to communication, respect, safety, and

engagement. The compact reinforces the idea that discipline is a collaborative effort grounded in the shared goal of helping children learn and grow.

Riverview Roots Elementary School Organization Chart



**Solid lines indicate supervisory authority. Dotted lines indicate functional leadership, coordination, or collaboration.*

Leonard J. Wardzala

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Senior-level results orientated business development leader. Skilled in building **international** business relationships, strategic sales, leading edge technology, and production start-up. **Creative & Conscientious professional** with capability to work at all levels of an organization, internal and external, to achieve business and technical solutions. **Outstanding record of success** in forming **international** business partnerships, growing existing accounts, improving margins, and securing new business. Success in team building

EDUCATION:

B.S.E.E. - University of Notre Dame, 1983

EXPERIENCE

KIMBALL ELECTRONICS Inc., Jasper, IN - \$1.49B Diversified Contract Manufacturer specializing in Durable Products with locations in Poland, Romania, Mexico, Thailand, China, USA.

Global Business Development Manager – Medical, Industrial, Automotive (2019-present)

Global Business Development Manager – Industrial Sector (2009-2019)

- Focus on **Medical** market including Auto Injector Market
- Landed Business for every Kimball plant and every market segment (**Medical**, Automotive, Industrial)
- Landed over \$500M+ in revenue.
- International Relationship Building, Lead generation, Lead Qualification.
- Customer Strategy Development.
- RFI and Proposal Development.
- Supply Agreement Negotiation – US & **International**.

VIASYSTEMS, Oak Creek, WI - \$800 Million Global Electro-Mechanical Contract Manufacturer.

Senior Program Manager (2008-2009)

- Leadership sales position reporting to the VP EMS Western World
 - Managed all commercial issues for the Oak Creek (Sheet Metal) site: Pricing & proposal generation, Global proposal strategy, Contract negotiation & execution, New Product Introduction, Customer satisfaction, Global NPI coordination between Viasystem sites in Wisconsin/South Carolina/Shanghai China/Juarez Mexico and customer global sites.
 - Directed a team of professional program managers & customer service representatives.
 - Oversaw the **GE Health Care** account including leading an internal team to reduce costs jointly with GE.
 - Led a cross functional team to transition a large telecom customer to Viasystems' Juarez Mexico.
 - Successfully led the introduction of Viasystems' largest new corporate customer Caterpillar ramping from \$300K/month to \$1 Million/month over a 4 month time period.
 - Obtained \$2.5 Million in cost recovery purchase orders from customers to offset negative PPV, startup costs, and increased energy costs.

NANO MICRO SOLUTIONS, LLC, Wheaton, IL – Advanced Microelectronic Development

Partner (2004-2008)

Setup a microelectronics company with very low overhead specializing in sensor and high-end microelectronics work for research organizations: negotiated use of 2000 sq ft clean room at Northern Illinois University, negotiated corporate insurance, established agreement with employment agency for engineering support as required. Projects included high temperature resistor network for Venus surface probe, quartz microbalance with embedded thermistor and heater for water scale measurement, sensor for caustic environment, sensor for Mars soil analysis.

WARDZALA CONSULTING, LLC, Burlington, WI - Independent Sales Representative & Contract Project Management
President (2004-2008)

- Represented the following contract services companies:
 - \$400M Electronic Manufacturing Services Provider – Creation Technologies.
 - \$60M **Medical** Electronic Contract Manufacturer – **Sparton Medical Systems**.
 - \$8M Multi-Discipline Design Service Provider – Bit7.
- Presented \$15 Million in **Medical** opportunities to Creation Technologies significantly expanding their Medical Market presence: Home Patient Monitoring, Hospital Medicine Pump, Hospital Breast Pump, Dental X-Ray, Home Kidney Dialysis, Medicinal Gas Deployment System.
- Successfully led the project engineering team to TOW \$15 Million of Telex Communication's PCBA business consisting of 700 assemblies into Creation Technologies' Oak Creek WI facility. This TOW was accomplished without interruption of supply and realizing all cost targets. Also supported 3 Telex design centers with on time delivery of quick turn prototypes and DFM services during the TOW.

AG COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, Genoa, IL – \$500 Million division of Lucent Technologies
EMS Business Leader (1997-2004)

- Led business diversification into the **Medical** and Automotive markets.
- Hired and supported independent sales representatives.
- Led sales team to grow business to \$55 million in revenue.
- Identified key accounts and defined strategy for growth.
- Determined pricing and created customer proposals.
- Negotiated key supply agreements.
- Developed marketing materials & initiated the creation of the EMS webpage.

Product Manager and Design Engineer (1996-1997)

- Realized \$2 Million improvement in operating income over a 1 year time period by directing a cross functional profit improvement team turning around a poorly performing business. Designed telecom line feed resistor network.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

HYTEL GROUP, Hampshire, IL, \$10 Million Electronic Contract Manufacturer
Product Engineering Director

AG COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, Genoa, IL, \$500 Million division of Lucent Technologies
EMS Applications Engineer & Manufacturing Engineer

ZENITH MICROCIRCUITS, Glenview, IL - \$50 Million EMS Division of Zenith Electronics
Product Engineer/Group Leader

PUBLICATIONS:

"Selecting an EMS Partner"

<https://www.kimballelectronics.com/docs/default-source/white-papers/choosing-an-ems-partner.pdf>

PATENTS:

- Nano-Porous Alumina Sensor. Issued Mar 13, 2012. US 8,132,457
- Method for Fabricating Thick Film Alumina Structures Used in High Frequency, Low Loss Applications and a Structure Resulting Therefrom. Issued Aug 14, 2007. US 7,257,281

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Town Of Lyons, Wisconsin – Planning Commission

Kettle Moraine Land Trust Board Member & Lyons Biodiversity Project Lead (2020-present)

Catholic Central High School, Burlington, WI - Board President (2016-2020)

PERSONAL / INTERESTS:

Swimming, biking, and canoeing. Reading. Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration. Married. 2 adult children.

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Certified speech-language pathologist with over 10 years of combined experience in speech-language pathology, education, and research. Professional experience includes pediatric speech-language pathology, design and implementation of professional development training sessions for educators, design and implementation of original research studies, project management, team leadership, training and supervision of junior employees, oversight of data collection, reduction, and management, fostering relationships with schools and community partners, writing reports, presenting data to stakeholders, and evaluating student speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and literacy skills using formal and informal testing.

Highlights

- Expertise in child speech, language, and social-emotional development
- Experience setting and implementing speech and language therapy goals with students and their families
- Proficient in the design and implementation of research studies and data management
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills
- Skillful evaluator with expertise in standardized speech, language, and literacy instruments as well as informal testing methods
- Passion for teaching children, educators, caregivers, and self
- Experienced public speaker
- Devotion to uplifting children and families in need
- Well-organized/Detail oriented

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Speech Therapist, Stacked Therapies, Burlington, WI, 2025 - present

Social Media Specialist, Oak and River Strategies, Decatur, GA, 2024-present

Speech Therapist, Cobb County School District, Marietta, GA, 2019

Speech Therapist, Dekalb County Public Schools, Atlanta, GA 2019

Instructor, Introduction to Language Disorders, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 2014, 2015, 2019

Instructor, Contemporary Issues in Communication Disorders, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 2018

Doctoral Fellow, Center for Research on the Challenges of Acquiring Language and Literacy, Atlanta, GA 2017-2018

Early Childhood Professional Development Consultant, Atlanta, GA 2017-present

Research Project Coordinator, Urban Child Study Center, Atlanta, GA 2014-2017

Guest Lecturer, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 2014-2017

Education Volunteer/Teacher Trainer, US Peace Corps, Republic of South Africa, 2012-2013

Pediatric Speech-Language Pathologist, Rehab Resources Inc., Jefferson, WI, 2010-2012

Guest Lecturer, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, 2010

Speech-Language Pathology Intern, University of WI Hospital, Madison, WI, 2010

Speech-Language Pathology Intern, Verona School District, Verona, WI 2009-2010

Professional Development/Consulting

Professional Development Consultant, Visual Schedules and Classroom Transitions, Atlanta Children's Shelter, Atlanta, Georgia, 2018

Professional Development Trainer, Language and Literacy in Early Childhood, KidsRKids, Marietta, Georgia, 2017

Certified Observer/Consultant, Partners for Community Action, CLASS Observations and Feedback reports, Atlanta, Georgia, 2017

Research Experience

NIH Georgia Learning Disabilities Research Innovation Hub – Graduate Research Assistant, 2013-2015

EDUCATION

Education of Students with Exceptionalities, Georgia State University, A.B.D. PhD Candidate not conferred

MS, Speech-Language Pathology, University of Wisconsin, 2010

BS, Communicative Disorders, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, 2008

AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS

Doctoral Fellow – Research on the Challenges of Acquiring Language and Literacy, 2017-2018

Certificate of Clinical Competence (Speech-Language Pathology), American Speech-Language/Hearing Association, Awarded 2011

Recipient, Student Travel Award, Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders, 2014 & 2015

Recipient, Students Preparing for Academic Research Careers Award, American Speech-Language/Hearing Association, 2009

Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System Certified Observer

Member, American Speech-Language/Hearing Association (ASHA)

Member, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Member, Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)

Member, Educational Psychology & Special Education Doctoral Student Association (DSA)

SERVICE

Founding Board Member, Clerk – BASD Foundation, Burlington, WI 2024-present

Communications Officer – Burlington Montessori PTO, Burlington, WI, 2024- present

Board Member, CESA Representative, - Burlington Area School District Board of Education, Burlington, WI 2023-2024

Volunteer - Kiwanis Club Safety Town, Burlington, WI 2022

Community Gardener – Love Inc. Food Pantry, Burlington, WI 2021 - present

Admissions Reviewer – Communication Sciences and Disorders Program, Georgia State University 2017-2018

Graduate Peer Reviewer, Georgia State University, 2016-2018

Field Day Volunteer, Dunbar Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015

Field Trip Organizing Committee, Georgia State University, 2015

Classroom Volunteer, Atlanta Children's Shelter, 2014

Career Day Speaker, Venetian Hills Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia, 2014

Literacy Screener, Connally Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia, 2013-2014

Planning Committee - Dyslexia and the Achievement Gap: A civil rights issue for our time, Georgia State University, 2013

Education Volunteer, United States Peace Corps, Republic of South Africa, 2012-2013

English Language Tutor, Literacy Network, Madison, Wisconsin, 2012

Bylaws of Roots Learning Collective, Inc.

Article I – Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of the corporation shall be Roots Learning Collective, Inc.

Section 2. Operating Name

The organization may operate under the name Riverview Roots Elementary School or other names approved by the Board of Directors for its educational programs and initiatives.

Section 3. Purpose

Roots Learning Collective, Inc. is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The organization's primary purpose is to establish and operate Riverview Roots Elementary School, a public charter school in Burlington, Wisconsin, initially serving grades 4K–3 and eventually expanding to 4K-5.

Article II – Offices

Section 1. Principal Office

The principal office of the organization shall be located in Burlington, Wisconsin. The organization may have other offices as the Board of Directors may determine.

Article III – Membership

The organization shall have no members. The management and control of the affairs of the organization shall be vested in the Board of Directors.

Article IV – Board of Directors

Section 1. Powers

The Board of Directors shall manage the affairs of the organization, including the approval of budgets, policies, and strategic decisions.

Section 2. Number and Qualification

The Board shall consist of no fewer than three (3) and no more than nine (9) directors. Directors shall be residents of the United States and committed to the mission of the organization.

Section 3. Term

Directors shall serve three-year terms and may be re-elected.

Section 4. Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the President or any two directors. A quorum shall consist of a majority of directors then in office.

Section 5. Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining directors.

Section 6. Removal

Any director may be removed for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Board.

Article V – Officers

Section 1. Officers

The officers of the organization shall be a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2. Election and Term

Officers shall be elected by the Board for one-year terms and may be re-elected.

Section 3. Duties

President: Presides at all meetings, oversees operations, and executes contracts.

Secretary: Maintains records, prepares minutes, and manages official correspondence.

Treasurer: Oversees financial management, maintains financial records, and reports on finances at each board meeting.

Article VI – Committees

The Board may establish committees as needed. Committees shall have duties and powers as designated by the Board. Committee members do not need to be directors.

Article VII – Planning Year Operations

The Planning Year is defined as the period prior to opening school to students, during which the organization prepares to begin operations. Planning Year activities may include development of educational curriculum, hiring of staff and recruitment, facility preparation and furnishing, legal and financial planning, fundraising, and grant applications. The Board may approve expenses related to these activities.

Article VIII – Fiscal Policies

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

Section 2. Accounting

The organization shall use the accrual method of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Section 3. Budget Approval

The Board shall approve the annual budget prior to the start of each fiscal year, including any Planning Year expenses.

Article IX – Conflicts of Interest

Directors, officers, and key personnel must disclose any personal or financial interest in a matter before the Board. Individuals with a conflict shall recuse themselves from decision-making on the matter.

Article X – Indemnification

The organization shall indemnify its directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by law for acts taken in good faith while performing their duties on behalf of the organization.

Article XI – Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting, provided that at least seven days' written notice of the proposed amendment is given.

Article XII – Dissolution

Upon dissolution, the Board shall distribute the organization's assets to another organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3), in accordance with federal and state laws. No assets shall insure to the benefit of any private individual.



State of Wisconsin

Department of Financial Institutions**Corporations Bureau****Form 102 - Nonstock Corporation Articles of Incorporation****Name of Corporation**

The corporation is organized under Ch. 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Article 1 Name of Corporation: Roots Learning Collective, Inc.**Article 2 Principal Office****Mailing Address:****City:****State:****Zip Code:****Article 3 Registered Agent****Registered Agent Individual:** Melissa Grandi**Name of Entity:****Street Address:****City:****State:****Zip Code:****Email:****Select Statement****Article 4 Select one statement:** The corporation will NOT have members**Article 5 Is this corporation authorized to make distributions under the statute?:** No**This document was drafted by:** Melissa Grandi**Article 6 Incorporator****Name:** Melissa Grandi**Street Address:****City:****State:****Zip Code:****Incorporator Signature****I understand that checking this box constitutes a legal** Yes

signature:

Incorporator Signature:

Melissa Grandi

Article 7 Optional Articles

The purpose(s) for which the corporation is incorporated:

This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The specific purpose of this corporation is to establish and operate a public charter elementary school in Wisconsin, providing a culturally responsive, nature-integrated, and equitable education to students from diverse backgrounds. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein. No substantial part of the

activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Upon the dissolution of the corporation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes.

Delayed Effective date:

Article 8 Directors

Name:

Melissa Grandi

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Name:

Molly Souza

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Name:

Bart Kocha

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Optional Contact Information

Name:

Melissa Grandi

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Endorsement

FILED

Received Date:

07/21/2025

Entity ID: