

School Improvement Plan For River Forest Middle School

Prepared for the 2016-17 School Year

River Forest Community School Corporation

Superintendent – Dr. Steven C. Disney
Assistant Superintendent – Mr. Kevin Trezak

River Forest Middle School Principal – Mr. Randall J. Horka

Committee Members

Randall Horka	Principal
Laura Johnson	Guidance Counselor
Courtney Quigg	Teacher
Sarah Otero	Teacher
James Wasmundt	Teacher
James Witt	Teacher
Estelle Galanos	Teacher
Angie Medina	Teacher
Jennifer Bisig	Teacher
Allison Nikollaj	Parent

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Corporation Mission Statement

The following is the River Forest Community School Corporation Vision/Mission Statement(s):

Vision Statement

Graduates of River Forest High School are empowered to succeed in the 21st Century.

Mission Statement

The River Forest School community is committed to creating a culture of continuous improvement where we develop a commitment toward effective learning geared toward 21st Century College and Career Readiness.

River Forest Middle School Mission Statement

Vision:

River Forest Middle School prepares students for academic and social success where students assume responsibility, actively participate in their learning, and strive to become lifelong learners.

Mission:

River Forest Middle School is a safe, caring community that empowers each student to dream, explore, and achieve

Belief Statements RFMS Students:

- Inspired to learn
- Navigate to success
- Give their best effort
- Outwardly focused
- Together in community
- Strive for excellence

History

The story of River Forest Junior Senior High School started early in the year 1956, which at that time, Hobart City Schools notified the township trustee that there was no room at Hobart for the freshman class of the coming school year. After investigating all possibilities, it was decided that the only way out was to house the incoming Hobart Township Freshmen in the Henry S. Evans Elementary School, and to start a holding company in order to build a proper high school. In the summer of 1956, a holding company was formed, known as the Hobart Township Building Corporation. An architect and attorney were hired, and plans for the new building were started. On March 1, 1957, it was announced that the State of Indiana would lend the money for building construction.

In June of 1957, the cornerstone was placed, and on August 17, 1958, there were 3,000 township residents looking over the new school in its open house ceremony. On September 24, 1958, the new River Forest High School was formally dedicated.

At the dedication the school had progressed from a dream into a realization of one of the finest school plants around. This project was accomplished by a unified effort of all people in Hobart Township; it was the outcome of a community that wanted the best for its youngsters and went out and got it.

The junior high addition began in 1958. It was opened for the 1959-60 school year. Extensive renovations (\$800,000) were done to the cafeteria and most shop areas in the late 1970's. Further renovations to the junior high-high school complex began in 1986 and continued through 1988. Modernization of the high school gym lobby, restrooms, home economics department, science department, and business department was included, along with the construction of a new gymnasium, locker rooms, and computer lab for the junior high building.

Profile - River Forest Middle School

River Forest Middle School is the only middle school in the River Forest Community School Corporation (RFCSC). The middle school is located in the Northwest corner of Indiana in Hobart Township, considered urban fringe of a large city. There are four schools in the RFCSC. With the start of the 2015-16 school year, the River Forest High School divided from its old configuration of being a Junior/Senior High School. Now in its second school year, 370 students in 6-8 attend the River Forest Middle School, while students in grades 9-12 attend River Forest High. Each student, grades 6-8, rotates to seven classrooms and seven teachers throughout the academic day. Each class period is 50 minutes long. The majority of residents in the River Forest community are renters rather than buyers. There are limited businesses within the school boundaries. River Forest has the lowest total assessed valuation and the highest tax rate of any corporation within the state. With a current total assessed valuation of \$19,819.54 and an assessed valuation per student of \$13,855, RFCSC is the poorest school district in the state ranking 294 out of 294 districts. Although RFMS struggles with one of the lowest supplemental educational services (SES) in the state and has one of the highest rates of single family households with the lowest parental education statistics in all of Indiana, the corporation works hard to avoid allowing our demographics to define who we are as a school or to determine the expectations we have for our students. Students attending River Forest schools live in either the city of Lake Station (Population 12,572) or the town of New Chicago. We also have tuition students that live in Hobart, Gary, Merrillville, and Portage. Both the Lake Station and New Chicago communities are quite similar as evidenced by the following information from the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau. 2012 Census Demographic Profile Highlights City of Lake Station Town of New Chicago Indiana High School Graduate or Higher 76.9 % 76.2 % 86.6% Bachelor's Degree or Higher 6.4 % 7.2 % 22.5% Families Below Poverty Level 22.6% 13.1 % 13.5% 2012 Census Demographic Profile Highlights City of Lake Station Town of New Chicago Class of Worker-Salary 90.7 % 87.5 % Household earnings-Less than \$10,000 annually 10.8 % 4.3 % Household

earnings-\$35,000-\$49,999 annually 24.1 % 15.5 % Household earnings-\$75,000-\$99,999 annually 11.3 % 9.7 % These community statistics play an integral part in the River Forest Middle School's profile. The median household income is \$24,224 and 22.6% of Lake Station lives below the poverty level. These statistics, for the River Forest Middle School and Senior High School respectively, are directly related and create a high free and reduced lunch rate of 76.7 % and 73.9%; 72 % and 66.5% of students receive free lunch and 4.7 % and 7.4% receive reduced lunch; another 23.4 % and 26.1% of students pay full price for lunch. The trend in ethnicity of RFMS shows us moving toward a balance of minority students and white students (177/144). Hispanics make up 44.5 % of the student body and 81% within the minority groups at River Forest Middle School. African Americans make up 3.7 % of the student body and 6.8% within the minority groups. Native Americans make up slightly less than .3% of the student body and .6 % within minority groups. Asian Americans make up .2% of the student body and .3% within the minority groups. The last group, Multi-racial, make up 6.5% of the student body and approximately 11.9% within the minority groups. Approximately 44.9% of River Forest Middle School's student population is white. The transient rate is very high at River Forest Middle School, with many students transferring between Lake Station Jr./Sr High School and River Executive Summary River Forest Middle School Page 2 © 2016 Advance Education, Inc. All rights reserved unless otherwise granted by written agreement. Forest numerous times within an academic year. The majority of other students who transfer to River Forest come from or tend to remain in the area and vice versa from Hammond, Gary, or East Chicago. A few students transfer from Hobart, Merrillville, or other areas to name a few. The River Forest Middle School staff and administrators are extremely focused on improving our students' performance from this past year. We feel as though we are in fact on the road to becoming a school that shows growth and continues to grow as an educational team. Four years ago, our ISTEP+ scores revealed that River Forest Schools were not meeting the needs of our English Learners (EL). Through the understanding of our Central Office administrators and our School Board, the school district agreed to refocus the attention to the areas of greatest need. We were able to hire two EL para-professionals whose sole purpose would be to aid in the instruction of our EL teacher. These para-professionals assisted students in grades 6 - 12 and played a vital role in

improving our EL populations' scores. During the last four years, our attendance rate has ranged from 65.9 % to 77.2%. The attendance rates at River Forest Middle School have improved based on the diligence of staff and a clearer attendance policy

According to the newly released accountability data delivered by the IDOE, 355 students were enrolled during the 2015-16 school year. Of those 355 students, 345 students took the ISTEP+ exam. In 2015-2016, 50.3% of the students passed the English and Language Arts Exam. In a clear area of need, the RFMS students passed the Math portion of ISTEP+ by only a 26.5%. River Forest Middle School designates two nights a year for Parent Teacher Conferences, one in the Fall and the other in the Spring, with resounding success. We understand the vital role that these conferences play in the education of our students and look forward to the to the opportunity to meet with our parents to discuss the success of our students. At River Forest a student information system, Harmony, is used to email parents updates on school news and student progress, as well as granting parents access to current grades and future lessons. Teachers and administrators still meet with parents outside of normal school hours or during teacher's common planning time, to discuss student achievement and concerns. River Forest Middle School has worked towards moving to a 1:1 e-learning environment for our students and teachers. Teachers across the district have attended various e-learning conferences from GAFE in Illinois to the HECC conference in Indianapolis. RFMS was awarded the Indiana e-learning planning grant in hopes of achieving full 1:1 implementation in the near future.

Location

Located in Northwest Indiana, River Forest High School is an urban-fringe community. Students attending River Forest schools live in either the city of Lake Station (Population 12,572) or the town of New Chicago. We also have tuition students that live in Hobart, Gary, Merrillville, and Portage. Both the Lake Station and New Chicago communities are quite similar as evidenced by the following information from the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau.

New Chicago:

- **Population in 2014:** 1,993 (100% urban, 0% rural).
- **Population change since 2000:** -3.4%
- **Males:** 1,005 (50.4%)
- **Females:** 988 (49.6%)
- **Median resident age:** 37.9 years
- **Indiana median age:** 37.3 years
- **Zip codes:** [46342](#).
- **Estimated median household income in 2013:** \$38,426 (it was \$32,759 in 2000)
 - **New Chicago:** \$38,426
 - **IN:** \$47,529

Estimated per capita income in 2013: \$18,633 (it was \$16,342 in 2000)

[New Chicago: Town Income, Earnings, and Wages Data](#)

- **Estimated median house or condo value in 2013:** \$98,520 (it was \$61,200 in 2000)
 - **New Chicago:** \$98,520
 - **IN:** \$122,200
- **Median gross rent in 2013:** \$737.
- **New Chicago Demographics**
 - **1,320/69.8% White alone**
 - **494/26.1% Hispanic**
 - **65/3.4% Black alone**
 - **13/0.7% Two or more races**
 - **5/0.3% Asian alone**
 - **2/0.1% American Indian alone**

- *For population 25 years and over in New Chicago:*
 - *High school or higher: 79.1%*
 - *Bachelor's degree or higher: 7.6%*
 - *Graduate or professional degree: 0.6%*
 - *Unemployed: 10.8%*
 - *Mean travel time to work (commute): 25.8 minutes*
- *For population 15 years and over in New Chicago town:*
 - *Never married: 34.2%*
 - *Now married: 41.6%*
 - *Separated: 0.0%*
 - *Widowed: 7.7%*
 - *Divorced: 16.4%*

Lake Station:

- *Population in 2014: 12,175 (100% urban, 0% rural).*
- *Population change since 2000: -12.7%*
 - *Males: 6,118* (50.3)
 - *Females: 6,057* (49.7%)
- *Median resident age: 37.9 years*
- *Indiana median age: 37.3 years*
- *Zip codes: [46405](#).*
- *Estimated median household income in 2013: \$37,961 (it was \$36,984 in 2000)*
 - *Lake Station: \$37,961*
 - *IN: \$47,529*
- *Estimated per capita income in 2013: \$17,312 (it was \$15,319 in 2000)*

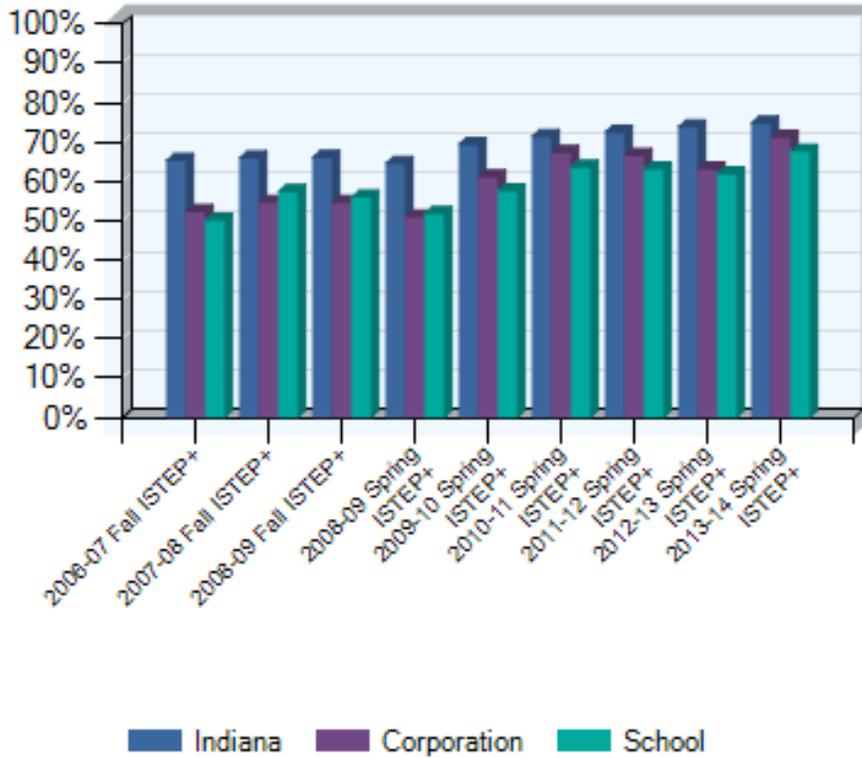
[Lake Station: City Income, Earnings, and Wages Data](#)

- *Estimated median house or condo value in 2013: \$80,724 (it was \$68,000 in 2000)*

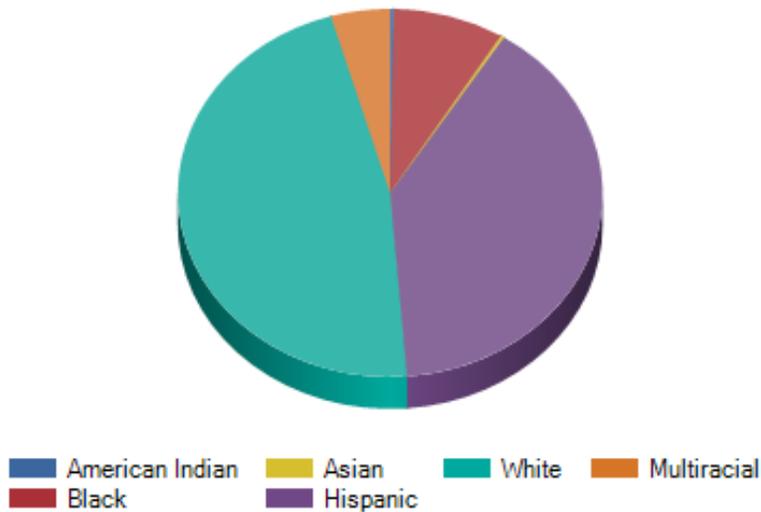
- **Lake Station:** \$80,724
- **IN:** \$122,200
- **Median gross rent in 2013:** \$777.
- **Lake Station Demographics**
 - **8,385/ 66.7% White alone**
 - **3,517/28.0% Hispanic**
 - **373/3.0% Black alone**
 - **215/1.7% Two or more races**
 - **40/0.3% American Indian alone**
 - **35/0.3% Asian alone**
 - **7/0.06% Other race alone**
- **For population 25 years and over in Lake Station:**
 - **High school or higher:** 79.1%
 - **Bachelor's degree or higher:** 5.6%
 - **Graduate or professional degree:** 1.0%
 - **Unemployed:** 8.8%
 - **Mean travel time to work (commute):** 24.3 minutes
- **For population 15 years and over in Lake Station city:**
 - **Never married:** 29.8%
 - **Now married:** 46.8%
 - **Separated:** 2.3%
 - **Widowed:** 6.2%
 - **Divorced:** 14.9%

School Data

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend



Enrollment 2015-16 by Ethnicity



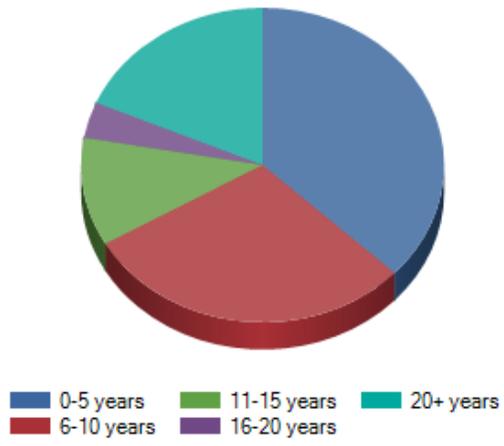
Enrollment 2015-16 by Free/Reduced Price Meals



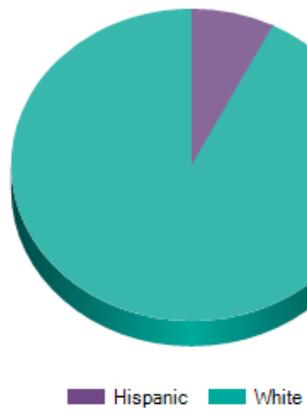
RFMS Staff

- River Forest High School currently has 27 certified staff.
- The staff works collaboratively both departmentally and interdepartmentally. Monthly staff and department meetings are held. Additionally, weekly PLC is held on Late Start Wednesday's. Various opportunities for professional development are provided by the school and district throughout the year.
- 25 teachers (93%) are White
- 2 teachers (7%) are Hispanic

Teacher Count 2015-16 by Years of Experience



Teacher Count 2015-16 by Ethnicity



Educational Programs that RFMS Provides

Students at RFMS are scheduled into a team model master schedule. For example, students in each grade will share the same grade level subject teacher. Students end each day in a class called SRT-Student Resource Time. On Monday's during SRT, all students take part in the character counts program. Each month, the RFMS students work collectively towards becoming a respectful, responsible, and safe young adult.

The 2016-17 school year has brought a number of new programs to help improve student learning and close the achievement gap between our students and the rest of Indiana. These programs include:

- After-school Tutoring in ISTEP Math and ELA
- After school point recover for students failing core classes
- Read 180
- System 44
- Study Island
- Algebra I Enrichment
- Double blocking of Math classes for identified students with newly hired Math teacher
- Career and Technical programs with Industry Recognized Certification
- Cooperative Education courses
- Virtual School
- Instrumental Music
- EL support
- Life Skills Classes
- Marching Band
- Junior National Honors Society
- Student Government
- Vocal Music
- World Cultures
- 6th Grade Reading Coach

Assessments used in Addition to ISTEP

- NWEA
 - All RFMS students in grades 6-8 will take the NWEA MAP test 3 times per year. Tested subjects include: Math, English, Reading, and Science.
- STAR Reading
 - All RFMS students in grades 6-8 participate in the Accelerated Reading program. Students are required to read and test upon AR books to meet AR goal determined by their ELA teacher.
- ALEKS
 - All RFMS students in math courses given ALEKS pre-tests and work towards achieving benchmarked indicators for each grade level.
- Study Island
 - Study Island is a brand new initiative for the RFMS this school year. Students have just begun using SI in their classrooms and will begin using the program during after school remediation periods in which the RFMS refers to as Point Recovery.

River Forest Middle School Testing Schedule			
Name of Assessment	Type	Grade Level	Test Window
NWEA	Benchmark	6, 7, & 8	Fall 9/12 - 9/22, Winter 1/23 - 2/3, Fall TBD
STAR	Benchmark	6, 7, & 8	Ongoing
WIDA	Benchmark	6, 7, & 8	1/9/2017 - 2/24/17
ISTEP+ Part 1 (Applied Skills)	State	6, 7, 8,	2/27/17 - 3/10/17
ISTEP+ Part 1 (MC & TE Items)	State	6, 7, & 8	4/17/17 - 5/5/17
ISTAR	STATE	6, 7, & 8 (intense program)	Ongoing

Curriculum

River Forest Community School Corporation regularly reviews and revises curriculum resources. For each subject area, a committee is appointed comprised of teachers, parents, and administrators. This committee is charged with curriculum alignment with state standards, which serves as the resource for the subject area curriculum guide.

Although the current curriculum in all subject areas has been developed in conjunction with and aligned to state content area standards, we are currently working to transition each subject area to the new Indiana state adopted standards on a yearly schedule with special attention to College and Career Readiness Standards and full implementation of e-learning using Google Chromebooks. The goal is to have all curriculum guides within River Forest Middle School aligned with the new Indiana State Standards by the start of the 2017-18 school year. Currently all English and Math courses are working to be aligned to the new Indiana State Standards. We are currently working on integrating literacy standards and College and Career Readiness Standards in all other content areas. Evidence of this will be seen with the creation of updated curriculum maps to begin the 2017-18 school year.

Instructional Strategies

River Forest Community School Corporation's curriculum is based on the standards to be mastered and suggested content to be taught to students, the sample methods used to teach this content, and the assessment process used to evaluate what students are expected to know and be able to do to meet either the Indiana Academic Standards. These curriculum documents are in the process of being revised and will be located in the teachers' classrooms, and the administrative office at each school, to begin the 2017-18 school year. These documents will outline expectations for student learning within each content area.

River Forest Community School Corporation teachers develop curriculum and lessons using best practices, as evidenced by each teachers lesson and unit plans, which are aligned to their final exams and final exam study guides. Teachers are trained at conferences, workshops, and during professional development opportunities offered (at the corporation level every Wednesday during PLC time) in the best practices shown by research to improve student learning. Case conferences and 504 conferences are periodically held to assure that individual educational plans and individual learning plans are appropriate to meet the needs of students with special consideration.

River Forest Middle School General Strategies:

- Curriculum Mapping will be completed by each teacher and will be available through the RFHS website.
- Students identified as needing Title I services are given are enrolled in either Read 180 or System 44 based upon their reading needs. Both classes are taught by a licensed reading teacher and include a Title I paraprofessional to assist in small group settings.
- Continuum of services including Language Acquisition for English Language Learners and special education services for Special Needs students.
- Formative assessments in English 6 thru 8 are given through NWEA to determine student acquisition of needed skills .
- Most students are enrolled in a last period of the day called SRT (Student Resource Time). On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, students focus on ELA standards and on Thursdays and Fridays on Math curriculum needs.
- All math classes, including a new teacher hired to double block math courses, are using ALEKS.
- In Algebra I & II also use NWEA to assess student growth at least 3 times per year

- Math Tutoring is offered twice a week after school. This tutoring concentrates on ISTEP test preparation as well as individual student needs. Students are transported home at 4:00 pm via a late bus.
- Course point recovery is offered after school for students who have failed or in jeopardy of failing one of their 4 core academic courses. Study Island is the main program used for this venture.

Evaluating Effectiveness

In 2011, the Indiana General Assembly passed the law (IC 20-28-11.5) mandating evaluation of all teachers and administrators every year. RFCSC has implemented a modified version of RISE that meets State requirements as the district-wide system for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Goals of RISE, RFCSC, and River Forest Middle School:

- Create an atmosphere of continued professional development and growth for all teachers and administrators.
- Create a collegial relationship between teachers and administrators utilizing the rubric as an assessment tool that will provide meaningful feedback for growth and development during observations, evaluation and professional development.
- Help new teachers become acclimated with their new surroundings.
- Identify teachers who will serve as a coach for the school.

All administrators and teachers are trained on the District's adopted rubric, coding and collecting data and utilizing the data to provide meaningful feedback and professional development opportunities. Every certified teacher is formally evaluated a minimum of twice a year by a licensed administrator as required by Senate Enrolled Act 1, 2011. All teachers must have a minimum of two extended observations per year, as well as many short observations deemed necessary by the administration. An extended observation lasts a minimum of 40 minutes. Long observations are announced and short observations are unannounced. It may take place more than one class or span two consecutive class periods. Extended observations are accompanied by post-conferences, including written feedback within five school days of the observation.

Parent and Community Participation

All incoming 6th grade students participated in a “Welcome to RFMS Day” two days before the official start of the new year. The half day program was considered a resounding success by all stakeholders, as students became acclimated with their move from a neighborhood elementary school to the districts larger middle school model. Also new this year, RFMS conducted an open house for parents in which families followed the exact schedule of their student so that they were able to learn about a “day in the life” of their middle schooler.

Through the school web page, School Connects (one-call), and Twitter the community has access to up-to-date information about issues involving academics, athletics, extra-curricular activities, etc. Each year, RFMS staff will host a registration open house for parents and students to visit the building before the school year begins to utilize help in online registration or for students to tour the building and acclimate themselves to their class schedule and locker location. RFMS staff organizes parent teacher meetings twice per year, once per semester, and will continue to seek parental involvement in building leadership.

The database system, Harmony, being used corporation-wide has a parent component, which offers information related to grades, attendance, etc. Parents are encouraged to stay abreast of their student’s progress. Parents are able to register their student online with the capability of updating demographic information, health records, emergency contacts, and obtain the student’s schedule, locker with combination, and transportation information as well as paying school fees without having the restrictions of the school day. Onsite help is always available for any parent who is new to the corporation, lacks access to the necessary technology, or needs assistance with the process.

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Technology as a Learning Tool

The River Forest Community School Corporation provides the resources for current technological equipment, professional development and technical support for students, staff and community to improve achievement. Affectionately called RF 2.0, technology is integrated as a natural part of the educational process in order to enhance learning in a changing global society. During the 2015-16 school year the entire middle and high schools were outfitted with wi-fi to help with technology integration in the classroom. Additionally, 150 Google Chrome Books have been allocated in technology carts to the middle school. To sustain this technology, several all areas of the building have been equipped with wireless access. Prior to going 1:1, 5 Star Learning Solutions will come in on December 15th and 16th of 2016 to evaluate top to bottom the technology progress that RFMS has made. Through the Innovations in Learning Grant, RFMS is in the best position ever to help move students to become lifelong learners. The demand for chromebook carts remains high at RFMS and working with 5 star, we hope to begin implementation of a full 1:1 program no later than the 2018-19 school year. Teachers from all disciplines use the chromebooks to enhance instruction on a daily basis. Every other staff meeting that is held for MS teachers keeps a technology theme for teachers to learn more about Google Classroom and other important e-learning initiatives. In addition, ALEKS allows teachers with both special needs as well as ELL students to offer support with diverse features directed especially for those students. The technology at River Forest Middle School is supported by the Director of Technology, a specialist, with a superb support team, as well as two technicians who remains at River Forest Middle-High Schools to perform maintenance tasks and troubleshoot software and hardware problems in a timely manner.

Exceptional Learners

River Forest Community School Corporation High Ability Program:

River Forest Community School Corporation is in the process of establishing a **Broad Based Planning Committee, BBPC**, to update yearly goals for our high ability students. This diverse committee, will be represented by RFCSC staff, parents, and community members, and will be given the challenge to meet the needs of these students by:

- Planning activities and ensuring high ability students in grades K-12 are given appropriate educational experiences.
- Providing multifaceted assessments to identify high ability students including students with economic disadvantages, diverse cultural backgrounds, or disabilities.
- Distributing staff development materials to every school. These materials give teachers the opportunity to develop and implement appropriately differentiated instruction in each academic subject based on the latest research.

Each school in RFCSC Community School Corporation follows the guidelines set by the Indiana State Code (IC 20-36) and our Broad Based Planning Committee will grow much stronger over the course (during 2nd Semester) of the 2016-17 school year. Our goals of continuous student improvement meets and fulfills the major components of PL 221. River Forest Middle School offers Algebra I for credit and students who excel academically also have an opportunity to participate in National Junior Honor Society.

Sustained Silent Reading during SRT

Every day during SRT Period, staff and students participate in SSR. During this 15 minute period of time, students and staff are asked to stop and read. Students are allowed to choose reading material that aligns with their interests. It can be fiction or non-fiction, but it cannot be textbook-related. Teachers are highly encouraged to model SSR for their students during this time.

SSR is given a period of time during SRT because it is seen as a positive initiative toward building an interest in reading for enjoyment, building stamina for reading focus, and allowing the students to learn more about themselves as readers. Through lessons created by RFMS Reading and ELA teachers, all staff members during SRT focus on strategies that improve reading comprehension across the board. Students take Accelerated Reading tests which in turn gives each student points towards their pre-determined AR goal.

River Forest Community School Corporation Special Education Program and Partnership with NISEC

River Forest Community School Corporation also provides services through the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative to those students eligible for special education services under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A wide-range of special education services is provided. Students receive services as described in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), and classroom teachers work cooperatively with special education teachers to ensure that every child receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

River Forest Middle School provides services to all special education students as indicated on the IEP. Services are provided in a wide range of environments including self-contained and co-taught classes as well as total immersion into general education classroom settings. Students who are attempting to earn Certificates of Completion rather than diplomas are also provided services in functional and independent living skills. Peer tutors are utilized in this program to increase social awareness and interaction.

In an effort to increase the amount of students with special needs in general education classrooms, the RFMS joined with NISEC to perform an audit of all students and appropriate placement. The goal was to lower the amount of students considered 51s and increase time in general education with support. This plan is fully implemented and its results will be forthcoming.

Cultural Competency

The River Forest Middle School Staff is committed to addressing the needs of every kind of learner. ESEA/ NCLB/ESSA subgroups with 30 or more students are: Black, White, Free & Reduced Lunch, and Special Education. Students are regularly analyzed based on NWEA/ISTEP+ and now Study Island. However, emphasis is on monitoring the growth subgroup for progress in the bottom 25% and top 75% and identifying no growth and if they are Special Education, LEP and Free/ Reduced Lunch.

District administrators have all read and thoroughly analyzed Eric Jensen's book, "Teaching with Poverty in Mind." The Title I Director attended an out of state conference hosted by Jensen and has met with every staff member in the district (MS 8/15/16 & 11/23/16).

Differentiating instruction is a cyclical process of finding out about the learner and responding by differentiating. The principal, plan team and grade level teams:

1. Identify, monitor and analyze student achievement data and data impacting student performance, such as attendance, tardiness, suspensions, and expulsions; subgroups including Free and Reduced Lunch, ethnicity, & special education will also be analyzed;
2. Incorporate culturally appropriate strategies for increasing educational opportunities and educational performance for each group in the school's plan; and
3. Recommend areas in the school's educational environment.

Cultural competence strategies consist of:

1. Acknowledging strengths and benefits that students and staff bring with them to the classroom.
2. Making connections between what students already know and what they are expected to learn.
3. Including multiple perspectives in decision-making and instruction.
4. Validating students' cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials.
5. Acknowledging and making connections to students' similarities and differences and their communities.
6. Being aware of one's own cultural identity and views and the influences those views have on classroom practices
7. Engaging families in a culturally meaningful way
8. Setting high expectations for students from culturally diverse and low-income backgrounds as capable learners
9. Working together as a team --- Not assuming that only minority teachers are culturally competent or that white teachers are not culturally competent

Culturally competent teachers will:

1. Understand that the way student think, behave and learn are influenced by factors such as race/ ethnicity, social class, and language.
2. Affirm the views of students from diverse backgrounds
3. View him-/herself as responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make River Forest High School more responsible to all students.
4. Understand how learners construct knowledge.
5. Know about the lives of his/ her students;
6. Use his/ her understanding of how students' learn and the knowledge about his/ her students' lives to connect what they already know to the new material they are expected to learn;

7. Continually build awareness of students' learning strengths and needs by observing and assessing their readiness, interests and learning preferences; and
8. Use a broad repertoire of effective instructional and assessment strategies to differentiate how students learn and how they demonstrate their learning (content, process, product, and learning environment)

Safe and Disciplined Learning Environment

In keeping with the River Forest Community School's commitment to maintaining schools that are safe, wholesome, and conducive to learning, River Forest Middle School is a very active participant in a number of safety initiatives that include building specific Crisis Management Plans that address, preparation, mitigation and prevention, as well as response and recovery. The RFMS, Principal belongs to the Lake County Safe School's Commission and works actively to develop plans to ensure the safety of all RF students. These plans are reviewed and revised as necessary on a consistent basis, and have also been inspected and approved by the Lake Station and New Chicago Police Department. The most recent plan implemented district wide is the SchoolGuard Safety app that allows all staff members to communicate to the outside emergency management teams of an active shooter inside the building. At the first November PLC day, all RFCSC staff members took part in an inservice in how SchoolGuard works and how to successfully download the application to their smart phones. A 5-mile perimeter has been set up around the RFMS and RFHS campus to alert all law enforcement of an active shooter inside of our buildings.

River Forest Middle School is also serviced by uniformed School Resource Officer who not only provides additional security, but also additional resources in working with our students, parents and our many partners and patrons in the community. The District Safety Initiative also includes random security checks that target all aspects of our school community. River Forest Middle School has surveillance and security systems that provide additional security and allow us to monitor our buildings and (some) parking areas 24 hours a day.

The corporation has also developed a district Safety and Crisis Management Handbook for all buildings and will continue each school year providing safety and crisis management training for all employees on a regular basis. There is a substantial investment by the corporation in an instant messaging system through School Connects that was initiated during the 2012-2013 school year which provides a rapid and coordinated response by e-mail, voicemail or text messaging to all of the districts stakeholders in a matter of minutes should a crisis or emergency arise. River Forest Middle School has also purchases Bully Box through Standards for Success to aligned with the line of thinkin that the district is committed to the safety process and believes good planning and continued preparation will provide an effective and immediate response should an emergency or crisis of any magnitude arises. RFMS involves the faculty in the training of students to behavior expectations at the high school level.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

A sub-committee with the RFMS Leadership Team, and including several other teachers as well as parents, has been formed and looks for ways to improve student behavior by targeted areas of improvement. Each Monday during SRT, all students take part in the character counts program with a differing focus theme each month. In conjunction with the incoming sixth grade students and the outgoing 8th grade students going to RFHS, we are looking for ways in which to provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes.

River Forest Middle School organizes its evidence-based behavioral practices and systems into an integrated collection or continuum in which student's experience supports based on their behavioral responsiveness to intervention. Three-tiered prevention logic requires that all students receive supports at the universal or primary tier. If the behavior of some students is not responsive, more intensive behavioral supports are provided, in the form of a group contingency (selected or secondary tier) or a highly individualized plan (intensive or tertiary tier). Monthly assembly's take place to celebrate the collective success of the student body in achieving behavior targets and character development successes.

Professional Development

River Forest Community School Corporation offers professional development district wide with Late Start Wednesday's to reinforce Educational Research and Dissemination that are designed to create a stronger connection between current educational research and classroom practice. Staff are also offered outside PD opportunities relating to current educational best practices on a first-come-first-serve basis. Several teachers at RFMS take advantage of these courses to stay current in best classroom practices.

On Wednesday, October 5th, the IDOE District 1 Outreach Coordinator spent the entire day with RFMS teachers discussing best practices in data analysis and promoting literacy across the curriculum. In addition to weekly PLC sessions, RFMS staff attend an 45-60 minute long staff meeting every three weeks to promote e-learning and follow up on building level initiatives. Staff Development at the building level occurs monthly during staff and departmental meetings where pertinent information is presented to the staff with opportunities to discuss relevant issues within the building. These opportunities will focus on the following areas:

- Learning Goals
- Google Classroom
- Effective Technology Integration
- Cultural Competency
- Data Management
- ELL Education
- School-wide Goals
- Technology (Chrome Books, Google Training, IT)
- Effective instruction
- Effective questioning
- Curriculum mapping
- Standardized testing
- Standards alignment
- Other relevant contemporary topics as they arise

Timeline: See Dates Listed	
School Wide Mission: Improve standardized test scores in English and Math ISTEP +	
Persons Responsible	IMPLEMENTATION
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Modification in course configuration for English 6, 7, and 8 which included all students participating in enrichment
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Modifications in schedule configuration for English and Math classes, including Read 180, System 44, and Double Blocked Math classes.
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	English and Math curricula modifications to accommodate course configurations
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Math pacing guide in conjunction with ALEKS for all Math Teachers.
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Professional Development in Study Island

Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Implementation of NWEA testing for all 6 th through 8 th grade students
Teachers	ALEKS online resource professional development for all Algebra I & Algebra II teachers
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Continued PLC meetings after each NWEA
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Posting of writing expectations school-wide
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Increasing literacy goals in all content areas by maintaining a sustained silent reading time for 15 minutes every day during SRT
Administration, Leadership Team, Guidance Office, Teachers	Remediate, Enrich, and Maintain during SRT periods— ELA—Tues/Wed. Math—Thurs/Fri

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

During the 2015-16 and start of the 2016-17 school year, the RFMS took part in schoolwide planning process that determined strengths and weaknesses of our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. In this analysis, the principal, teachers, and members of the school leadership team considered assessment data from ISTEP+ results, NWEA MAP Assessment Data, school culture, parent involvement, teacher feedback, and professional development needs.

Through working with our IDOE Outreach Coordinator, it was determined that RFMS, while technically an “A” school because of Indiana’s held harmless act that took effect last year, still showed the results of a focus or even a priority school. Now with the release of the latest school accountability report, RFMS has indeed been determined to be a “F” school and placed on priority status.

River Forest Middle School, working to proactively address the needs of our students, has identified two priority areas of improvement: Leadership and Curriculum and Instruction.

River Forest Middle School

Priority Areas of Improvement

Priority Area of Improvement #1: Leadership

Priority Area of Improvement #3 Curriculum and Instruction

Priority Area of Improvement #1: Leadership

- School Improvement Plan: **working document**
- School mission, vision, and belief statements: newly created 11/16

Vision:

River Forest Middle School prepares students for academic and social success where students assume responsibility, actively participate in their learning, and strive to become lifelong learners.

Mission:

River Forest Middle School is a safe, caring community that empowers each student to dream, explore, and achieve.

- Climate surveys: **given to staff (9/15) and parents (1/16)**
- Focus groups: **Team Leaders, Leadership Team**
- Data protocols: **The third PLC of every month is dedicated to data analysis of NWEA and the newly instituted Study Island Program.**
- Walk-through forms: **Standards for Success**
- Evaluation system: **Standards for Success**
- Formative assessment: **ALEKS, Study Island, Read 180, System 44**
- Faculty, student, and parent handbooks: **Student Handbook posted online (8/16)**
- Master schedule: **Revamped 6/15 updated 6/16**
- Behavior system: **Modified PBIS System/Team Competitions**

- Expectations posted for both behavior and academics: **Weekly behavior and academic competitions between grade levels.**
- Curriculum guides **(in progress)**
- Lesson plan format **(LP format used via Harmony unless included in a teacher improvement plan.)**
- PLC and grade level meeting agenda: **conducted and implemented with fidelity**
- Common Assessments-**NWEA, Study Island**
- Professional Development plan: **submitted for semester 1 with focus on rigor and engagement.**
- Staffing protocols and guidelines: **Outlined with all staff on the day before school started and at weekly team meetings.**

Priority Area of Improvement #3: Curriculum and Instruction

Ensure that teachers utilize research-based, rigorous and effective instruction to meet the needs of all students and aligned with State Standards.

- Administrative walkthrough data **(teachers have at least 1, ten minute walk through per week in which feedback is shared weekly)**
- Informal and formal teacher observations: **All teachers have a set number of long and short evaluations with unlimited number of walk throughs using SFS.**
- Lesson plans: **Lesson plans are kept in Harmony, our online data warehouse unless a teacher is working on an improvement plan.**
- Posted lesson objectives: **It is the expectation of all RFMS teachers that learning goals are posted daily and relevance is explained to each class.**
- Examples of student work: **It is an expectation for all RFMS teachers to celebrate success both individually and collectively.**
- Student surveys and interviews: **Monthly meetings between principal and student council representatives.**
- School climate survey and data: **Staff and Student Climate surveys have been given within the past year and will again be given before the end of**

the 16-17 school year. Parents will be given a survey at our January 2017 parent teacher conference date.

- School focus group-**Leadership Team, Team Leader Meetings, and Student Council Sessions with the Principal**
- Common assessments and rubrics: **ALEKS Data and Accelerated Reader Data is shared between departments at one PLC per month (Data Dig)**
- Formative and summative assessment data: **Also at the Data Dig, NWEA and Study Island Data is shared at least once per month during PLC time**
- School process data: **Shared weekly at on Mondays during team meetings.**
- Discipline reports: **Shared weekly at on Mondays during team meetings.**
- Student/ parent handbook: **Extensively updated for the 2016-17 school year. Given to each student in a handbook/agenda format, and also on the RFMS website.**

Attendance

Attendance continues to be an area of concentrated effort for River Forest School. The school walk zone is very close around the school. This is sometimes a cause for students to miss school, especially in inclement weather. The strategies to improve attendance include an automated calling system for absentees and tardies that goes out to families twice daily, personal phone calls, home visits by the administration, school resource officer, or other corporation officials.

ATTENDANCE OBJECTIVES Action Plan: Good attendance is essential if students are to achieve and reach their potential. Several steps have been put in place to assist students who are struggling to attend school. A phone call will be placed to the parent on any absence or tardy. A letter will be sent home after five absences and the Principal and Guidance Counselor will be notified. A second letter will be sent home after ten absences and the Principal, Guidance Counselor, and School Resource Officer will be notified. The student will be placed on a mandatory attendance contract. During the final step, the student will be referred to the Juvenile Probation Department through a Truancy Intervention Referral.

Interventions: The attendance policy is sent home with all students in the student handbook

and is made available to families on the corporation website. The habitual unexcused absence students are identified and reviewed by using the chronic absentee log that is generated through the office of the guidance counselor. This list will include students with five or more absences. The first notice is sent home after five unexcused absences and a meeting with the school guidance counselor is scheduled to analyze and discuss the circumstances with the parent/guardian. A second notice is sent home to the parent/guardian after ten days unexcused. Home visits will start at this time, if they have not already been put into motion. A second meeting with the guidance counselor is scheduled. Next, an official Student Study Team referral is sent to the Principal after 12 unexcused absences. The school will then continue to put interventions in place that could include the local law enforcement and the prosecuting attorney.

Incentives: For chronic attendance abusers: Individual attendance plans will be developed. Included in the plan will be attendance rewards for each five day period they are at school. Rewards may include, but are not limited to, the following: attendance certificate, phone call home, lunch line cuts, school supplies, etc.

Students who have 95% or higher attendance rate during each 9 week period will earn rewards: certificates, ice cream sandwiches, tickets to high school athletic events, etc. At each semester rewards will also be given that include the above mentioned items and could include school spirit wear as well. Students who earn a 100% attendance rate will earn all of the previous items mentioned and an additional reward that could include free lunch from a local business or free passes to a variety of extra-curricular activities. Academic convocations will be conducted to include attendance awards as well as academic excellence.

School Improvement Goals

GOAL #1 ELA: By June 2017, RFMS students that comprise the bottom 25% will improve their reading comprehension by AT LEAST 1.5 years on the NWEA MAP/ISTEP+ tests.

GOAL #2 MATH: By June 2017, RFMS students that comprise the bottom 25% will improve their overall math ability by AT LEAST 1.5 years on the NWEA MAP/ISTEP+ tests.

Support Data: ISTEP+ Scores, Common Assessments, Accelerated Reader, NWEA MAP tests, Study Island, Read 180, System 44, ALEKS		Standardized Assessments: ISTEP+, NWEA		Local Assessments: Formative Assessments for ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies	
Intervention: Students will utilize formative assessments to monitor their own learning and progression toward mastery of standards in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. Continued PD in differentiated instruction, reading and writing across the curriculum, collaboration with elementary and high school teachers for vertical alignment. Students identified as most in need will take an additional math class and/or Read 180-System 44.			Research/Best Practices: Student Resource Time, ALEKS, Title I and Title III intervention strategies, RtI model for student tiered improvement		
Suggested activities to implement intervention	Person(s) Accountable	Timeline		Resources	Staff Dev. Activities
		Begin	End		
<p>-Weekly Professional Development for Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differentiated Instruction -Daily oral language activities -Problem solving techniques -Students not passing classes will be enrolled in PM point recovery -Students not passing ISTEP will be enrolled in PM ISTEP remediation -Students identified as in need be placed in an additional math block. -Students identified as in need be placed in Read 180 or System 44. <p>-Virtual Data Room</p> <p>Targeting areas addressed in SIP. Staff, grade level, team meetings are held and updated to review data internally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ISTEP -NWEA -Attendance 	<p>Team Leaders, Admin.</p>	<p>Aug 16</p>	<p>June 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Curricular Materials -ALEKS -Study Island -System 44 -Read 180 -i-Lit -Chromebooks -ISTEP+ Data -NWEA MAP Data -Parent Teacher Conferences -RtI Planning and implementation -Google Classroom (docs, drive, sheets, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Professional Learning Communities -Leadership Team Meetings -Grade Level Meetings -Department Meetings -Technology Bootcamp -e-Learning Tips and strategies at Staff Meetings -Teacher led PDs -IDOE Outreach Coordinator In-Service -EL Coordinator/Data Coaching -Special education reviews and procedures
	<p>Admin, Teachers</p>	<p>Nov 16</p>	<p>May 17</p>		
	<p>Admin, Teachers</p>	<p>Feb 17</p>	<p>May 17</p>		
	<p>Admin, Title Director</p>	<p>Aug 16</p>	<p>June 17</p>		
	<p>Admin, Title Director</p>	<p>Aug 16</p>	<p>June 17</p>		
	<p>Admin, Team Leaders, Teachers</p>	<p>Oct 16</p>	<p>June 17</p>		

<p>-Discipline Formative Assessments SRT-Remediate, Enrich, Maintain</p> <p>Point Recovery Program Study Island-Teacher and Student Driven. 4 Different offerings: ELA, SCI, SS, Math 75 minutes after school Transportation home at 4:00 daily</p>	<p>Teachers</p> <p>Admin, Teachers, Parents, Trans. Dept.</p>	<p>Aug 16</p> <p>Jan 17</p>	<p>June 17</p> <p>June 17</p>		<p>-Rtl Collaboration/Team</p> <p>-PBIS Universal Team</p>
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Documentation of Support by River Forest Teachers Association

As required by 511 IAC 6.2-3-3, I, as the exclusive representative of the River Forest Teachers Association, have reviewed and support the Professional Development Section of the Continuous School Improvement Plan for River Forest Middle School.

Signature of Exclusive

Representative _____

Date:

Waived Statutes and Rules

_____ No statutes or rules have been waived at this time.

_____ The following list of statutes and rules have been waived:

Certificate of Submission

The committee, comprised of the building principal, administrators, teachers, parents, and community member(s), have submitted the final draft of the Strategic and Continuous Improvement and Achievement Plan to the superintendent. The school improvement committee has considered the recommendations of the superintendent and revised the plan at their discretion. The final plan has been presented to the superintendent and the school board.

Signature of Building

Principal _____

Date:

This school improvement plan has been reviewed in accordance with the timelines established under I.C. 20-10.2-3-2.

Review by River Forest Community School Corporation Board of School Trustees

WHEREAS a three year Continuous School Improvement Plan has been developed and coordinated by the building principal with input from a committee of persons which included the principal, teachers, parents, students, and community member(s) for River Forest Middle School, and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has reviewed the plan to ensure that the plan aligns with the school corporation’s mission statement, goals, and expectations, and

WHEREAS the governing body is required under Indiana Law to review said plan, and

WHEREAS the governing body reviewed this plan on this date, at the Administration Building located at 3250 Michigan St. Hobart, IN 46342
THEREFORE BE IT KNOWN that the governing body will submit this plan to the Indiana Department of Education as required under 511AC 6.2-3-5 Sec. 5. and directs that a copy of this plan remain on file for public review in the office of the building principal.

Signature of
Superintendent _____
Date:

This school improvement plan has been reviewed in accordance with the timelines established under I.C. 20-10.2-3-2.