



Rivendell
Interstate School District



Rivendell Interstate School District Programming Assessment

2025 - RISD

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1 SUMMARY

1.1 RISD Overview

Schools within District: Rivendell Academy Westshire Elementary School Samuel Morey Elementary School	School Addresses: 2972 Route 25A Orford, NH 03777 744 VT Route 113, West Fairlee, VT 05083 214 School St. Fairlee, VT 05045
Years Constructed/Additions:	RA: - West: 1957, 1973, 1990 - East: 2000 WES: 2001 SME: 1957 & 2000 addition
Property Owner:	Rivendell Interstate School District
Point of Contact:	Randall Gawel – Superintendent
Property & Use Classification Types:	Educational – Primary & Secondary School Buildings
Total SF/Area of School Buildings:	Rivendell Academy East: 45,778 Est. sf Rivendell Academy West: 29,469 Est. sf Samuel Morey Elementary: 28,424 Est. sf Westshire Elementary: 23,804 Est. sf
Stakeholder Meetings & FCA Visit Dates	Rivendell Academy Staff: 6/16/2025 Rivendell Academy FCA: 6/16, 6/17 & 6/18 2025 Westshire & SME Staff: 6/5/2025 Community Stakeholder meeting: 7/30/2025

1.2 Foundations for Master Planning: Programming & Facility Conditions

The Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD) retained the services of Colin Lindberg Architect (CLA), Freeman French Freeman Architect (FFF) with consultants of Civil Engineering Associates (CEA), LN Consulting, Inc. (LN), and PM&C Estimators to conduct a facility conditions and programming assessment for each of the district’s schools including reviews on mechanical, electrical and heating plant systems evaluation as well as a general condition accounting of the main superstructure, envelope, space (interior as well as exterior site conditions) and provide assessment based recommendations on site and program evaluations for future long term master planning for the school district.

The Programming Report serves as a foundational component of the Rivendell Interstate School District’s master planning process, offering a comprehensive analysis of current and projected academic programming and curricular offerings across all schools. It draws on data provided by the

district, feedback from staff and community stakeholders gathered during key meetings, and findings from interviews, observations, and reviewed documentation as furnished by the district. The report’s purpose is to evaluate how educational delivery—across grade levels and disciplines—is evolving in response to shifts in pedagogy, enrollment trends, and community expectations, particularly in the context of declining enrollment.

By assessing programmatic needs in parallel with building condition evaluations conducted by other members of the professional team, the report provides a holistic view of how physical space supports or constrains instructional goals. This dual focus—program and facility—ensures that recommendations for renovation, expansion, or reconfiguration are grounded in both infrastructure realities and the district’s vision for future-ready learning environments. In addition, the report considers the adaptability of existing spaces to support emerging instructional models, interdisciplinary learning, and inclusive practices, helping ensure that facilities remain flexible and responsive to long-term change. Ultimately, the Programming Report presents a set of informed, strategic possibilities for the community to consider as it plans for the future of academic programming and facilities across the district.

Master Planning View

Master planning is a collaborative, long-range process that helps a school district align its educational vision with its physical spaces, resources, and community needs. It involves assessing current facilities, enrollment trends, instructional goals, and stakeholder priorities to develop strategic recommendations that guide future investments and decisions.

A master plan is not just about buildings—it’s about creating environments that support learning, equity, and adaptability. It is informed by the voices of community members and stakeholders, while also considering how each school fits into the broader district ecosystem. The goal is to ensure that facilities are safe, efficient, and flexible enough to meet evolving educational demands—while honoring the values, identity, and operational feasibility of the community.

1.3 Methods

The programming assessment for the Rivendell Interstate School District was informed by a comprehensive data collection process. This included stakeholder and community engagement sessions, structured surveys, and targeted meetings with district staff. In addition, on-site facility evaluations, civil site assessments, and analysis of the 2025 Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) findings provided critical insight into existing conditions and future needs. Together, these methods ensured a balanced understanding of both programmatic priorities and physical infrastructure.

1.4 Key Findings

Stakeholder input revealed a strong desire for instructional flexibility, improved facility conditions, and long-term planning that reflect evolving enrollment and community needs. Themes of consolidation, equity, and preserving school identity emerged consistently, with particular emphasis on maintaining student-centered environments and fostering collaboration among staff. Survey data and direct quotes highlighted concerns about aging infrastructure, limited programmatic space, and the need for clearer communication around future options. These findings underscore the importance of strategic decision-making that honors local values while addressing capacity, accessibility, and educational quality.



2 DATA SOURCES

2.1 RISD & Community School Enrollment Figures

School	PreK	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Adult	TOTAL
Rivendell Academy								26	27	33	36	29	32	25	1	209
Samuel Morey Elementary	30	14	14	15	12	13	12									110
Westshire Elementary	25	14	9	11	10	9	12									90
TOTAL	55	28	23	26	22	22	24	26	27	33	36	29	32	25	1	409

131 NH Students & 278 VT Students

Projected Enrollment			
Year	Elementary (PreK-5)	Grades 6-12	Total
2022-2023	197	243	440
2023-2024	233	188	421
2024-2025	183	223	406
Projected 2025-2026	224	207	431

Homeschool Students	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	TOTAL
Rivendell Academy							1		1	3	5	3	4	17
Samuel Morey Elementary	1		1		1									3
Westshire Elementary				2	1	1								4
TOTAL	1		1	2	2	1	1		1	3	5	3	4	24

- All Enrollment Numbers Provided by RISD



2.2 Stakeholders Involved

- Faculty & Staff
- School District Administration Staff
- Community Members
- School Board

2.3 Site Assessments, Building Plans, & Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)

- Visual site assessments included:
 - Rivendell Academy
 - Westshire Elementary School
 - Samuel Morey Elementary School
- Programmatic review of Building plans (blueprints) and square footage assessment
 - Rivendell Academy East and West campus
 - Westshire Elementary School
 - Samuel Morey Elementary School
- Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)
 - Rivendell Academy, East & West campus
 - Westshire Elementary School
 - Samuel Morey Elementary School



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Sources & Information Gathering Process

To develop a comprehensive understanding of current programming across the Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD), a multi-modal approach to data collection was implemented. This included surveys, facilitated input sessions, stakeholder engagement, and on-site evaluations. The following outlines methods were utilized:

Surveys

- **Online Surveys**
Distributed via district communication channels to elementary school staff.
- **Paper Handouts**
Provided during elementary and middle/high staff input meetings, with a request for attendees to share feedback on programming, site functionality, and user experience.
- **Survey Focus**
Questions addressed programming strengths, gaps, and priorities, tailored specifically for school staff and student-facing employees.
- **Data Analysis**
Responses were compiled and analyzed thematically across all district schools.

Staff Input Meetings

Two in-person sessions were held to gather qualitative insights from educators and support staff:

- **Session 1:** Included staff from Samuel Morey Elementary School (SME) and Westshire Elementary School (WES)
- **Session 2:** Engaged staff from Rivendell Academy (RA)

Discussions focused on instructional programming, space utilization, student needs, and cross-grade collaboration. Notes were recorded and coded to identify recurring themes and actionable recommendations.

Community Stakeholder Meeting

A joint in-person meeting was convened with the district school board, representatives from CLA and Freeman French Freeman, and members of the community.

- **Purpose:** To surface district-wide priorities, community values, and long-term programming goals

- **Participants:** Included parents, educators, board members, and local leaders—both in person and via livestream provided by the school board to ensure accessibility
- **Documentation:** Feedback was recorded and incorporated into the programming assessment and recommendations

Note: This meeting was recorded by the district and may be available through the local school board.

Site Walkthroughs & Facility Documentation

To assess the physical environment and its alignment with programming needs, in person walkthrough tours were conducted at all three district schools to record and observe current conditions: Samuel Morey Elementary, Westshire Elementary, and Rivendell Academy.

- **Focus Areas:** Classroom layout, shared spaces, accessibility, and instructional flow
- **Supplemental Materials:** Architectural blueprints provided by RISD were acquired and reviewed alongside walkthrough observations to identify opportunities and constraints within each building. Changes to building layouts were taken note as well as photo/video capture of various conditions during building tours by the consultant teams.

3.2 Limitations & Considerations

The following outlines key limitations and considerations to keep in mind when reviewing the programmatic assessment of the Rivendell Interstate School District:

- **Sample Size & Representation**

Stakeholder interviews at this stage did not include student input. Future planning efforts will seek to incorporate student perspectives during subsequent phases of conceptual development and design charrettes.

- **Timing of Data Collection**

In-person staff meetings were held once per age group near the end of the academic calendar year. These sessions gathered feedback from staff who were available to attend. School leaders were encouraged to follow up with colleagues unable to participate, inviting them to share additional insights and perspectives on academic programming.

- **Access to Academic Schedules**

This assessment takes a broad view of state requirements for square footage, student-to-faculty ratios, current building conditions, and available space, alongside stakeholder feedback. It does not include a detailed analysis of daily academic schedules or instructional time allocations.

- **Interpretation of Qualitative Feedback**

Much of the stakeholder input was gathered through open-ended responses, which offer rich but inherently subjective insights. Thematic coding represents a combination of individual perspectives and research interpretation and should be understood within this context.

- **Projected Enrollment Figures**

According to the New Hampshire Department of Education's *2024 Manual for Planning and Construction of School Buildings*, specifically the section on determining school building size—NHED's recommendations are based on several factors, including a five-year enrollment projection and baseline square footage aligned with those projections. Since the Rivendell Interstate School District's current enrollment projections extend through 2026, it has now reached the time for the district to update the next five-year enrollment projection period.



4 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 School Sizes, Enrollment Numbers and Physical Capacity Allowances

<i>School</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Square Footage</i>
<i>Rivendell Academy</i>	East Wing	+/- 45,778 sq ft
	West Wing	+/- 29,469 sq ft
	Total:	+/- 75, 247 sq ft
<i>Westshire Elementary</i>		+/- 23,804 sq ft
<i>Samuel Morey Elementary</i>		+/- 28,424 sq ft

4.2 Enrollment Numbers per School

<i>School</i>	<i>Total Enrollment 2024-2025</i>
<i>Rivendell Academy</i>	209
<i>Westshire Elementary</i>	90
<i>Samual Morey Elementary</i>	110
<i>Est. Total Home School Enrollment</i>	27
<i>Total est. School District Enrollment</i>	409
<i>Total District Enrollment & Homeschool</i>	436

Based on enrollment figures provided by RISD

4.3 Estimated Capacity per School

All classroom capacity estimates below are based on current available room sizes at each school and use square footage guidelines from New Hampshire Department of Education or Vermont Agency of Education. Calculations reflect NH & VT state standards for elementary and middle school programming, which typically require more square footage per student than secondary education levels. These capacity figures are intended as rough estimates and may vary depending on program type, room configuration, and instructional needs.

New Hampshire General Education Space Guidelines:

New Hampshire guidelines specify the following minimum square footage per student for typical school classroom construction and programming:

- Kindergarten: 50 sq ft/student
- Elementary (Grades 1–5): 36 sq ft/student
- Middle School (Grades 6–8): 36 sq ft/student
- High School (Grades 9–12): 32 sq ft/student

Source:

New Hampshire Department of Education. (n.d.). Manual for planning and construction of school buildings. Retrieved from [2024 Manual for planning and construction of school buildings](#)

Vermont General Education Space Guidelines:

The Vermont “SB Rule” (Statute and Rule for School Boards) previously outlined minimum recommended classroom sizes. These figures remain useful as general planning benchmarks when evaluating instructional space needs:

- Kindergarten: 50 sq ft/student
- Elementary (Grades 1–5): 30 sq ft per student
- Middle School (Grades 6–8): 30 sq ft per student

High School (Grades 9–12): 30 sq ft per student

These standards offer a helpful reference point for assessing classroom capacity and guiding future space planning discussions.

Source:

Vermont State Board of Education. (2008). School construction planning guidelines. Vermont Department of Education.

Samual Morey Elementary School - Classroom Capacity:

Samual Morey Elementary School Gross Total School SF: 28,424 sf

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Primary Design Intent</i>	<i>Grade/ Current Use</i>	<i>Square Foot</i>	<i>Max. Student Capacity based on current use</i>	<i>Full Utilization Capacity</i>
3102	Classroom	Pre-K	655	18	-
3103	Classroom	Pre-K	685	19	-
3109	Classroom	Kindergarten	1037	20	-
3112	Classroom	SPED	682	22	-
3126	Classroom	1 st	758	25	-
3130	Classroom	3 rd	754	25	-
3132	Classroom	2 nd	852	28	-
3143*	Classroom	Music/Arts*	725	14	24
3145	Classroom	After the Bell	792	26	-
3147	Classroom	4 th /5 th Math	780	26	-
3149	Classroom	4 th /5 th	743	24	-
<i>* Rooms with asterisks denote a space that could potentially function as a standard classroom space</i>					
<i>SME Classrooms Total Student Capacity</i>					
<i>(Based on current classroom use with corresponding AOE standards for that space use)</i>				247	257

SME Prior 24-25' Enrollment

110 Students

Westshire Elementary School - Classroom Capacity:

Westshire Elementary School Gross Total School SF: 23,804 sf

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Primary Design Intent</i>	<i>Grade/ Current Use</i>	<i>Square Foot</i>	<i>Max. Student Capacity based on current use</i>	<i>Full Utilization Capacity</i>
4113	Classroom	1 st	803	26	-
4115*	Classroom	Music/Art*	777	15	21
4119	Classroom	Kindergarten	1,026	20	-
4120	Classroom	Pre-K	732	21	-
4126	Classroom	Pre-K	762	21	-
4131	Classroom	Intervention K-5	773	25	-
4137	Classroom	2 nd /3 rd	775	25	-
4138*	Classroom	STEAM K-5*	766	15	21
4140	Classroom	4 th /5 th	1,033	34	-
<i>Westshire Classrooms Total Student Capacity</i> <i>(Based on current classroom use with corresponding AOE standards for that space use)</i>				202	214

* Rooms with asterisks denote a space that could potentially function as a standard classroom space

Westshire Prior 24-25' Enrollment

90 students

Based on classroom square footage and Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) guidelines, Westshire Elementary School can accommodate between 202 and 214 students, depending on how classrooms are classified and utilized. This is more than twice the current enrollment of 90 students shown projected for the 2024–2025 school year.

Samuel Morey Elementary School has a total classroom capacity of 247 students, with a current enrollment of 110 students. While its instructional space is comparable in size to Westshire's, the building is significantly older, presenting several infrastructure challenges:

- Ventilation systems and other mechanical components are aging and may require replacement.
- Interior Finishes are approaching the end of their expected lifecycle.
- The building exhibits a higher degree of non-compliance with current accessibility standards.

These example factors contribute to a greater need for capital investment to maintain safe, functional, and equitable learning environments.

Rivendell Academy – Classroom Capacity:

Rivendell Academy Gross Total School SF: 75,247 sf

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Wing</i>	<i>Primary Design Intent</i>	<i>Grade/ Current Use</i>	<i>Square Foot</i>	<i>Max. Student Capacity</i>	<i>Full Utilization Capacity</i>
1101	East	Specialty	Music	938	-	-
1104	East	Specialty	Music	798	-	-
1122	East	Classroom	Unknown	825	22	-
1124	East	Classroom	ELA	776	21	-
1126	East	Classroom	Unknown	798	22	-
1206*	East	Specialty	Makers Space*	719	16*	19
1208*	East	Specialty	Makers Space*	767	17*	21
1210	East	Classroom	ELA	815	22	-
1212	East	Classroom	Math	731	20	-
1213	East	Specialty	Art	879	19	-
1216	East	Classroom	SPED	793	22	-
1217	East	Specialty	Science Lab	879	19	-
1218	East	Classroom	Math	817	22	-
1219	East	Specialty	Science Lab	875	19	-
1223	East	Specialty	Science Lab	879	19	-
2106*	West	Classroom	IT Dep. *	584	0	16
2108	West	Classroom	Math	865	24	-
2113	West	Classroom	Unknown	635	17	-
2114	West	Specialty	Special Services	541	15	-
2115	West	Classroom	Unknown	643	17	-
2123	West	Specialty	(Was a stage prior)	895	24	-
2125	West	Classroom	Unknown	917	25	-
2127	West	Classroom	SPED	948	26	-
2139	West	Classroom	Social Studies	880	24	-
2141	West	Classroom	Unknown	872	24	-
2143	West	Classroom	Humanities	861	23	-
2154	West	Classroom	Unknown	850	23	-
2156	West	Classroom	Health	864	24	-
2162	West	Classroom	Unknown	887	17	-

* Rooms with asterisks denote a space that could potentially function as a standard classroom space

RA Classrooms Total Student Capacity
(Based on current classroom use with corresponding NH State standards)

491

511

RA Prior 24-25' Enrollment

209 Students

Based on current classroom footprints and square footage guidelines aligned with New Hampshire Department of Education standards for elementary and middle school programming, Rivendell Academy has the physical capacity to accommodate approximately 491-511 students (within current classroom instructional spaces).

The 2024–2025 enrollment at Rivendell Academy was 209 students, resulting in a percentage of utilization of approximately 40 to 45% of chore instructional capacity. Many repurposed spaces, such as the Makers Space, Library, West wing community room, West wing kitchen and former locker rooms were acknowledged as underutilized spaces or serve new or expanded programming that would likely be better served if those programs were relocated to spaces better suited for the intended use.

4.4 Stakeholder Feedback

Elementary Staff Insights from Westshire & Samuel Morey Elementary

Staff at Samuel Morey and Westshire Elementary Schools shared a range of observations through surveys and input sessions, offering personal perspectives on their current programming environments. Their insights highlight both the strengths and challenges of working within these facilities, shaped by daily experience and evolving instructional needs.

A recurring theme was the shared use of instructional spaces, with rooms often serving multiple functions such as counseling, special education, and after-school programming. This included both intentional multi-use (e.g., After the Bell, SPED) and adaptive use in response to space limitations. As one Samuel Morey staff member noted, “We share our space with mental health counseling and meetings, which can be disruptive when trying to maintain a consistent learning environment.” Storage constraints were frequently mentioned, with educators expressing a desire for more secure and accessible solutions. A Westshire staff member shared, “We have one closet that’s shared with tech supplies and another small workroom that’s overflowing. We need locking cabinets and better shelving.”

Environmental conditions also surfaced in feedback, particularly around temperature regulation and facility wear. A Pre-K teacher at Samuel Morey commented, “Our classroom gets extremely hot in the warmer months, and the air exchanger hasn’t worked in years.” Others noted concerns with flooring damage and the need for more child-friendly furnishings.

Staff also described program-specific needs, such as movable shelving for the library, sensory zones for SPED, and health office reconfiguration. Despite these challenges, many educators expressed a sense of adaptability and commitment to their spaces. “We’ve made it work,” wrote a Westshire respondent, “but with a few adjustments, it could be even better.”

Looking ahead, staff perspectives varied. Some encouraged the district to consider state-level consolidation discussions before making major changes, while others felt that existing space could support future growth with thoughtful planning. These reflections offer valuable insight into how educators experience their environments and what they envision for the future.

Stakeholder Feedback on Consolidation and Future Planning:

Stakeholders across the Rivendell Interstate School District shared a range of perspectives regarding the future of school facilities, including potential consolidation. Many expressed a desire to preserve instructional identity and ensure adequate space for all grade levels, while also acknowledging the importance of aligning educational programming with long-term operational sustainability. Several participants noted the challenge of maintaining underutilized spaces, particularly when facility costs appear disproportionate to current enrollment levels. These reflections underscore the need for continued dialogue that considers both community values and practical constraints.

Some Rivendell Academy staff voiced hesitation about accommodating a full K–12 program within the existing layout, citing square footage constraints and the importance of preserving specialized spaces like the Makers Space and science labs.

Samuel Morey Elementary was identified as having a range of different physical deficiencies—such as inadequate ventilation with needs for upgrades to its HVAC system, outdated infrastructure, and limited compliance with ADA standards needing improvements. One educator noted that while the school has heart, it may not be the most sustainable long-term investment.

Community Stakeholders, Administration & School Board:

The community forum brought together Rivendell Interstate School District board members, community stakeholders, and architectural consultants to discuss the future of district facilities and programming. The conversations reflected a shared and genuine desire to provide educational excellence, fiscal sustainability, and inclusive, transparent approach to planning with broad support for a method that preserves program breadth while consolidating future resources into a more efficient delivery model.

Community Feedback Themes:

- **Access & Facility Use**

Community members expressed a desire for clearer protocols around building access, especially for outside organizations. Suggestions included exploring ways to designate portions of school facilities for limited public use—such as community programming or municipal functions—while maintaining secure boundaries that protect student safety and avoid opening entire buildings.

- **Comfort, Climate & Health**

There was strong consensus that environmental comfort, particularly air quality, temperature regulation, and daylight control, is essential to student well-being and learning outcomes.

Several participants advocated centralized air conditioning and improved ventilation across campuses.

- **Equity & Compliance**

One resident raised concerns about ADA compliance and civil rights obligations, urging the district to ensure that future planning meets accessibility standards for all students and visitors.

- **District Boundaries & Transportation Equity**

Public sentiment revisited past commitments to limit student travel distances. Questions emerged about geographic alignment, early childhood access, and the implications of operating with fewer buildings.

- **Strategic Visioning**

Participants engaged in open dialogue about whether Rivendell Interstate School District should operate with only two buildings moving forward. Ideas included merging or dissolving district boundaries, reinvesting in centralized campuses, and aligning with Vermont's legislative direction on school consolidation.

School Board Reflections:

- Board members expressed a desire to thoughtfully balance community values with practical considerations, including enrollment trends and facility conditions.
- There was interest in exploring consolidation models that preserve program breadth while potentially improving operational efficiency.
- The board emphasized the importance of stakeholder input in shaping facility priorities and committed to continued transparency throughout the planning process.

4.5 School Building Space Observations and Assessments

Rivendell Academy:

Rivendell Academy consists of three distinct buildings. The West Wing includes two separate structures, built during different time periods, which are connected by a single corridor. The East Wing, constructed in 2000, is not physically connected to the West Wing. Together, these buildings currently serve as the district's middle and high school campus.

Each building features a centralized administrative office layout, dedicated drop-off zone, and adjacent parking. Despite their physical separation, the current programmatic use of the buildings cohesively function as a unified facility and campus serving grades 6–12. The East Wing serves as the primary entrance and administrative hub, anchoring shared use of educational spaces and fostering integrated programming and staff/student collaboration.

The campus includes two gymnasiums (one per wing), a primary kitchen and cafeteria in the East Wing, and an older kitchen adjacent to the West Wing gymnasium. Classroom distribution across both wings reflects a mix of general instruction, specialty spaces (e.g., science labs, art, Makers Space), and support services.

Observations from site visits and stakeholder input suggest that Rivendell Academy’s infrastructure offers flexibility for expanded use. Any future planning would likely require targeted renovations and programmatic adjustments, and should be guided by continued engagement, enrollment analysis, and alignment with district priorities.

Westshire Elementary School:

Westshire Elementary is a single-story facility with a compact yet flexible layout currently supporting PreK–5 programming. It includes a mix of general classrooms and specialty spaces—such as a STEAM room, intervention room, and music/art room—that could be repurposed to expand instructional capacity depending on future program needs. Based on space assignments, the building’s classroom capacity is estimated between 202 and 214 students.

The facility features a centralized administrative office, a single drop-off zone that supports ease of supervision and access, and an adjacent parking area. Classrooms are generally well-sized, and the building includes a multi-use “gymnasium” that currently supports a range of programmatic activities. Staff noted that the kitchen serving area, separate from the gym, can contribute to elevated noise levels during meal periods due to its corridor layout and acoustics.

Westshire’s overall layout supports grade-level zoning and has been described by staff and stakeholders as adaptable to evolving instructional needs.

Samual Morey Elementary School:

Samuel Morey Elementary is a multi-room facility serving PreK–5 students, with a classroom capacity estimated between 247 and 257 students depending on space assignments. The building currently supports a full range of instructional programming, including music, art, special education, and the After the Bell program. Some classroom spaces have been adapted to meet these needs, though staff have noted that certain rooms feel undersized or are affected by inconsistent environmental controls. Infrastructure concerns—such as aging ventilation systems, ADA compliance needs, and other items noted in the 2025 FCA report—have been raised as potential barriers to comfort and functionality. Staff feedback highlighted challenges with temperature regulation, particularly during warmer months, as well as limitations around storage and shared space usage.

4.6 FCA Impacts

The chart below offers a synopsis of key observations and a few of the recommended infrastructure steps noted for each building from the 2025 Facility Condition Assessment (FCA). The table below is a high-level snapshot to support ongoing conversations as they relate to district program planning.

Please see the complete 2025 FCA document for full detail on system conditions, cost estimates, and technical recommendations provided.

Building	FCA Observations	Some Recommended next Steps
Samuel Morey Elementary (SME)	- HVAC systems are outdated; limited ventilation and fresh air intake. - Flooring and ceiling finishes show wear and water damage. - ADA compliance is limited in restrooms and circulation paths. - Electrical panels and lighting systems are aged. - Windows, doors, and insulation are original and minimally effective.	- Replace HVAC systems and improve ventilation. - Upgrade restrooms and circulation paths for ADA compliance. - Replace flooring and ceiling finishes. - Modernize electrical panels and install energy-efficient lighting. - Improve building envelope for thermal performance.
Westshire Elementary (WES)	- HVAC systems are aging but more functional than SME. - ADA access is generally compliant; minor restroom updates needed. - Acoustical concerns in dining area due to sound transmission. - Interior finishes show moderate wear. - Roof and windows are in fair condition.	- Plan for phased HVAC replacement. - Address acoustical issues in shared spaces. - Refresh interior finishes as needed. - Monitor and maintain roof and window integrity. - Complete minor ADA restroom upgrades.
Rivendell Academy (RA)	- East Wing (2000) has modern systems and general ADA compliance. - West Wing (1980s) has outdated HVAC and limited ADA compliance. - Interior finishes in West Wing show significant wear. - Electrical systems vary by wing; older panels in West. - Underutilized spaces identified for potential repurposing.	- Replace HVAC systems in West Wing. - Upgrade restrooms and circulation for ADA compliance. - Refresh finishes and flooring in older areas. - Modernize electrical systems in West Wing. - Evaluate underutilized spaces for future programming needs.

Summary and Forward-Looking Considerations:

Site walkthroughs, building layout reviews, Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) data, enrollment numbers and stakeholder feedback collectively highlight key factors affecting the Rivendell Interstate School District, including declining enrollment and highlighted infrastructure needs across multiple campuses. These findings provide context for the following section, which outlines potential scenarios based on programmatic layouts and incorporate relevant insights from the FCA and stakeholder engagement process.

5 LOOKING AHEAD

5.1 Exploratory pathways for District Consideration

The following options reflect a range of possibilities developed through the findings of stakeholder input, facility assessments, and enrollment analysis. Each pathway presents unique factors to consider and is designed to inform ongoing discussion and planning efforts, rather than define a singular course of action. These models are adaptable and should be viewed as starting points for community discussion and refinement.

Full Consolidation into Rivendell Academy

This option explores consolidating all district programming for grades K–12 onto a single campus at Rivendell Academy. With a total classroom capacity estimated between 491 and 511 students, and a projected K–12 enrollment of approximately 370¹, the facility could comfortably accommodate the entire student population. Targeted remodeling and reconfiguration would be needed to support programmatic needs and address facility condition and system aging concerns.

This approach leverages Rivendell Academy’s newer East Wing infrastructure and flexible layout, potentially reducing operational overhead while fostering a centralized campus model that supports instructional continuity and collaboration. Importantly, the available capacity would also allow for the future inclusion of Pre-K programming (estimated at ±55 students¹) should the district choose to expand services, pending space planning and dedicated early childhood design considerations.

¹ *Enrollment figures based on district-provided resources and four-year average enrollment data (2022–2026).*

Benefits:

- Maximizes use of existing space and infrastructure
- Reduces long-term capital investment in aging buildings
- Supports unified staffing and scheduling models
- Aligns with declining enrollment trend

Considerations:

- Requires intentional redesign to support programming for elementary aged students (and Pre-K if elected).
- May impact community identity tied to legacy campuses
- Transportation logistics and costs would require evaluation

Elementary Consolidation to Westshire

This model proposes consolidating elementary programming at Westshire Elementary School, which has the capacity to support the district’s elementary education needs. Westshire’s layout and available space offers potential to serve as a centralized elementary hub for younger learners, while Rivendell Academy remains well-suited for middle and high school programming.

It’s important to note that this recommendation would likely require reconfiguring some space at Westshire to fully support projected elementary enrollment. Modest updates or additions may be needed to ensure the facility can accommodate both core instructional needs and essential support spaces—such as areas for student services, non-core curriculum, storage, and administrative functions. These adjustments would help maintain a well-rounded learning environment and address operational impacts associated with combined enrollment.

Benefits:

- Preserves age-appropriate learning environments
- Minimizes disruption to younger learners
- Reduces reliance on Samuel Morey, which may require significant repairs and code compliance updates
- Maintains two operational campuses with distinct instructional identities

Considerations:

- Requires reconfiguration of specialty and support spaces at Westshire
- May require modest capital investment at both Westshire and Rivendell Academy
- Transportation and staffing models need to be reassessed

Maintain All Campuses with Targeted Facility Improvements

This option proposes preserving the current program structure while investing in facility upgrades across all three campuses. Guided by the FCA report, priorities include improvements to HVAC systems, ADA compliance, safety infrastructure, and instructional space reconfiguration at Samuel Morey, Westshire, and Rivendell Academy. The FCA identified these upgrades as essential to maintaining safe, functional learning environments and mitigating long-term facility risks.

This approach supports community presence in each town and minimizes disruption to existing programming. It also allows for phased capital planning, enabling the district to address critical needs over time. However, the FCA findings indicate that significant investment will be required—particularly at Samuel Morey and Westshire—due to aging systems and deferred maintenance. Given projected enrollment trends and long-term financial considerations, this model may present sustainability challenges that warrant further analysis.

Benefits:

- Preserves community presence in all towns
- Minimizes disruption to current programming
- Allows for phased capital planning

Considerations:

- Requires significant investment in aging infrastructure
- Likely presents long-term challenges considering enrollment trends
- Challenges addressing long-term financial planning concerns

Assess District Merger and/or Dissolution

This long-range option explores the possibility of merging with neighboring districts or dissolving the current interstate structure, aligning with broader Vermont state-level conversations around school governance and consolidation. It would require legal, financial, and community analysis, and is contingent on guidance from Vermont and New Hampshire education agencies.

Benefits:

- Opens pathways to regional collaboration and resource sharing
- Likely to lead towards an increase in program accessibility (for programs not currently offered by the district), improve funding equity and operational efficiency
- May align with ongoing state-level conversations around school governance and consolidation

Considerations:

- Requires extensive stakeholder engagement and legal review
- May impact district identity and governance autonomy
- Timeline and feasibility are dependent on external factors

5.2 Further Exploratory Considerations**Future Use of Samuel Morey & Westshire Buildings**

Should the district decide to pursue full or partial consolidation at Rivendell Academy, the future use of Samuel Morey Elementary and Westshire Elementary buildings will become a significant topic for community dialogue. Various concepts have arisen through engagement and planning, reflecting local priorities, practical concerns, and an interest in preserving these facilities as valuable community assets.

Community-Centered Reuse Possibilities

One concept that has surfaced is repurposing the buildings as town offices and community centers—spaces that could support municipal functions, public gatherings, and local programming. This

approach could help maintain the buildings as active, accessible hubs while honoring their legacy as places of learning and connection.

- *Samuel Morey Elementary* might be adapted into a Fairlee town office and community center, with flexible rooms for meetings, events, and local organizations
- *Westshire Elementary* could serve a similar role in West Fairlee, with its larger layout offering potential for multipurpose use

Early Childhood Access Considerations

To address concerns about transporting the district’s youngest learners farther from home, the district could explore a distributed PreK model. In this scenario:

- Each town’s community center could host Pre-K programming, keeping early childhood education close to families.
- These programs might operate as satellite classrooms under the district’s umbrella, with shared staffing, curriculum, and oversight

This concept supports early childhood development and learning while leveraging existing infrastructure in a community-friendly and potentially cost-effective way.

Alternative Hybrid Consideration

Another possibility involves consolidating Grades 4–12 at Rivendell Academy, while retaining PreK–Grade 3 programming at Westshire Elementary. This mirrors elements of the Elementary Model discussed earlier and could offer a balance between centralized resources and age-appropriate environment considerations.

- *Westshire Elementary* could serve as a PreK–3 campus, given its flexible layout and physical condition.
- *Samuel Morey Elementary* could be a full-time community center, with potential for part-time educational or public programming.

This consideration reflects a desire to support developmental needs while maintaining community ties to familiar spaces.

These ideas are exploratory and intended to support ongoing dialogue. They reflect a commitment to educational equity, community preservation, and thoughtful use of district facilities. Any future decisions should be shaped by continued stakeholder engagement, financial analysis, and alignment with Vermont and New Hampshire educational guidelines.

6 WHAT'S NEXT?

6.1 Final Thoughts

As Rivendell Interstate School District looks ahead, this programming report offers a foundation for informed decision-making rooted in both community values and infrastructure realities. The exploratory models and ideas presented here are not definitive solutions, but starting points—intended to support ongoing dialogue, strategic planning, and collaborative visioning. Whether the district chooses to consolidate, reconfigure, invest in existing campuses, or explore broader structural changes, future steps should be guided by continued engagement, financial analysis, and alignment with educational goals. Above all, the district's commitment to equity, adaptability, and student-centered learning remains central to shaping a sustainable and inspiring future for all learners.

6.2 Next Steps

This report marks a meaningful milestone—but it's just the beginning of Rivendell's next planning chapter. With facility assessments and stakeholder input now in hand, the district and community are well-positioned to begin shaping real options for the future.

The next phase will involve developing conceptual models that integrate educational priorities with facility realities. These models can help visualize how different configurations, whether consolidation, renovation, or reallocation, might support learning, sustainability, and community connection. If invited to continue supporting this work, our team is prepared to collaborate closely with district leaders, educators, families, and students to ensure these concepts reflect the values and needs expressed throughout this process.

We also propose facilitating design-focused workshops (charettes) that invite deeper engagement. These sessions would be collaborative and inclusive, offering space for community members, including students, to respond to draft ideas, share lived experiences, and help shape the future of Rivendell's schools.

As planning continues, we can provide tools and guidance to evaluate feasibility, prioritize investments, and prepare for future funding opportunities. Whether it's mapping space use, exploring phasing strategies, or aligning with state guidelines, we're ready to help the district move forward with clarity, creativity, and confidence.

This next chapter is about possibility—and we'd be honored to help shape it, together.