

# Sailing to Success: Charting a Course to Educational Excellence



Strategic Plan SY24-25 - SY 26-27

Two Rivers Public Charter School 1227 4th Street NE Washington, DC 20002 www.tworiverspcs.org



© 2024 by Two Rivers Public Charter School.

### Contents

A Message from Leadership	3
Goal and Mission	4
About Two Rivers	5
Student Demographics	5
Scholarly Habits	7
Overview of the Process	8
Our Plan at a Glance	10
Our Goals	11
Our Goals and How We Will Measure Them	12
Progress Monitoring	18
Our Appreciation	19



### A Message from Leadership



Dear Two Rivers Community,

As we prepare to celebrate our twentieth anniversary as an excellent public school option for students from across the District, there is so much that makes us proud. We are living the dream of founding families nearly two decades ago who wanted a school that challenged their children and engaged them in *authentic*, *multidisciplinary*, *and experiential* learning; a school that nurtured their ability to connect with one another and to the world around them; and a school that prepared them for *rich and varied options for their future*. And they wanted a school where learning was *joyful!* 

Our mission and goal have come to life in the diverse alumni who have matriculated from Two Rivers to attend excellent high schools, pursued college and career options

of their choosing, given back to their communities, and remain on a joy-filled journey of lifelong learning.

Families today continue to be excited and inspired by our schools all these years later as we annually enroll over 1,000 students across our three campuses. They tell us about the ways they have watched their children blossom, the deep relationships their children have established with peers and educators, and the connection they feel to our community on "the boat."

As we launch our voyage into our next decade of operation, we are excited to share this strategic plan, which will guide the next three years of our work. Built from the insights of our students, families, and staff, the plan reflects resounding feedback to choose deepening and doubling down on our current approach to teaching and learning over large pivots or departures. Educational excellence will be achieved through the critical and intensive work of growing our people, fueling our culture of crew, and strengthening our systems – all in close partnership with families and guided by data. With these ingredients, every one of our students will experience the challenge, support, and success promised by Two Rivers' mission and goal. We are ready to get to work!



As our school song reminds us, "the boat we are sailing in was built by many hands" and the engine that propels our schools will forever be our amazing community. Please join Two Rivers on this journey!

In partnership,

Belicia Reaves Executive Director Two Rivers Public Charter School



### **Goal and Mission**

**GOAL:** When students graduate from Two Rivers, they will have the cognitive and social skills to succeed in high school and college so that they are positioned to have rich and varied options for their future.

**MISSION:** To nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

**RACE & EQUITY VISION STATEMENT:** We believe that racial equity is an area of growth for our nation and our network and that we can and must do better to serve all students, staff, and families. We are committed to being an exemplary anti-racist institution that nurtures diverse students to have rich and varied options. As such, we strive to eliminate the racial inequities found in our achievement and staffing data. We believe that life at Two Rivers must reflect equity and participation by all racial, cultural, and economic groups to better provide a learning environment where all community members feel a sense of belonging and have a voice in our organization's policies and practices. Therefore, we will continually work to eliminate and remedy all forms of oppression, systemic racism, and white privilege wherever they exist in our school network.

#### **CORE VALUES**



#### **Experience And Grow**

Learning is active and rooted in a continuous cycle of inquiry, experience, grappling, reflection, and sharing.



#### Be Thoughtful We are intentional and deliberative in decisions and actions.

#### **Give Access** Everyone is entitled to be included and all are challenged to do advanced learning.



#### Nurture Relationships

We make connections, build trust, have honest conversations, and care for each other.



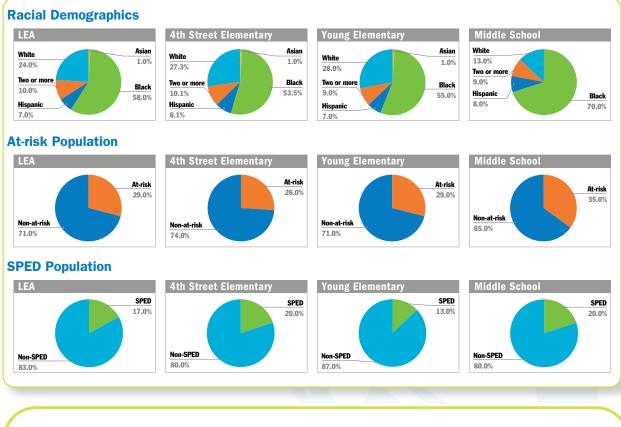
#### Learn Better Together Our work is improved by considering multiple

Our work is improved by considering multiple perspectives and making meaning together.

### About Two Rivers

Two Rivers is a network of public charter schools centered on deep, project-based learning and communitybuilding for students in Pre-K through Grade 8. We serve over 1,000 students each year across our three campuses in Washington, D.C. Each of our schools fosters curiosity, character, and deep engagement with learning and with one another.

#### Student Demographics



Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education, praised the school, saying, "The model you're creating here... is very, very significant... I couldn't be more proud. Keep it going, don't stop!"

#### Muriel Bowser, DC Mayor, speaking at the Two Rivers

Young Elementary School ribboncutting ceremony shared her excitement about our new campus and the contributions Two Rivers would make to the Carver Langston community.



Ron Berger, Chief Academic Officer of EL Education said "There is no school that I have visited in 43 years that takes instruction more seriously than this school, that gets more geeky, more obsessed, more worried about getting instruction right for kids than this place." Rainah Taylor, alum said, "Going to Two Rivers taught me everything I needed to know about empathy and kindness."

Erin Sheehy, parent and Board member said, "From the second I stepped foot into the 4th Street building, I knew it was where I wanted my children to go. There was so much love, joy, positive energy, and happiness that I didn't want to leave. That feeling has been a constant during our 15 years at Two Rivers. TWO RIVERS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

### A little bragging...

### 

An energetic group of parents founded Two Rivers in 2004 with 150 students with four ideals at the forefront: project-based learning that is rigorous and joyful, social-emotional learning, a full complement of specials, and a diverse community.



The Two Rivers Sharks have been league champions in co-ed soccer (in their inaugural year), girls and boys volleyball, and girls and boys basketball. The girls basketball team is currently back-to-back champs!



All staff engage in year-long, small group conversations to surface personal implicit bias and systemic inequity around race and other lines of difference. Anchor texts have included Street Data, Unconscious Bias in Schools, Blindspot, and Courageous Conversations About Race.



In response to COVID burdens, Two Rivers created the "Neighbor in Need" fundraising campaign, which raised nearly \$100,000 to supply emergency food and other resources to families.



#### STUDENT ACTIVISM

Seventh graders created works of performance poetry as a climax to their module on resistance and resilience. Congresswoman DeLauro (D-CT) honored the students and their teachers by pronouncing the booklet, *The Power of Student Voices*, into the Congressional Record.

## 

In order to foster stellar learning opportunities, Two Rivers has deep ties with local businesses, non-profits, and public offices including NoMa BID, Capitol Hill Community Foundation, NorthBay Adventure Camp, and members of City Council.



#### **TOWERING ARTS PROGRAM**

Two Rivers has a go-go band (Tidal Wave), an elementary school chorus that performed on the National Mall, and an annual middle school musical (in its 14th year of performing).

#### ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Last year, over 80% of our students were admitted into one of their top three choices for high school. About 60% placed into a selective public high school (Benjamin Banneker, School Without Walls, McKinley Tech, Duke Ellington).

Students additionally matriculated to other strong public schools - Capital City, Ron Brown, Sojourner Truth, Washington Latin, Thurgood Marshall Academy, and more. Several attend high-quality independent schools such as Sidwell Friends, Gonzaga, Archbishop Carroll, Edmund Burke, Dematha, and Elizabeth Seton.

#### **Scholarly Habits**

The Scholarly Habits derive from the EL Education and Responsive Classroom tenets and are Two Rivers' way of making those standards visible and guiding students' social emotional success. They articulate the social and emotional outcomes we want for our students:

### I KNOW MYSELF.



I can identify my emotions. I have an accurate self-perception I recognize my strengths. I demonstrate self-confidence. I advocate for myself.

#### I AM INDEPENDENT AND RESILIENT.



I control my impulses. I manage my stress and emotions. I act with self-discipline. I am self-motivated. I set realistic goals and work to meet them. I can organize my materials. I can plan and manage my time.

#### I SHOW COMPASSION AND EMBRACE DIVERSITY.



I see others' perspectives. I demonstrate empathy for others. I appreciate diversity. I respect others.

#### I CAN CONNECT AND COLLABORATE.



I can actively listen. I can actively listen. I actively engage with others. I build relationships with diverse individuals and groups. I cooperate with others and negotiate conflict constructively. I seek and offer help when needed.

#### I ACT WITH INTEGRITY.

I identify problems. I analyze personal and social situations. I constructively solve personal and social problems. I evaluate the impact of my actions. I honestly reflect on the impact of my actions.

### **Overview of the Process**

This plan was a truly collaborative effort over the course of the winter and spring of 2024. We began with an in-depth review of existing data and documents to best understand the current strengths and areas of need across the Two Rivers network.

We established an advisory committee of select board members, staff, and families that worked alongside our outside facilitator from DeliverEd to develop an inclusive process.

Then, we conducted extensive stakeholder engagement through:

- Interviews with leaders across the network and campuses
- A review of survey data from students, families, and staff
- Student focus groups
- · Input gathered from staff during professional development
- · Joining FSA meetings to hear from families



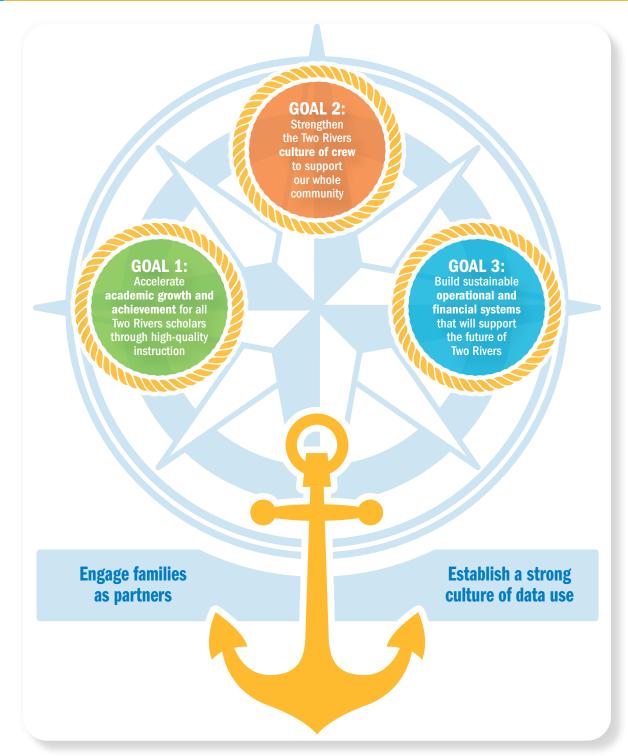


Using the data and information collected from that data review and stakeholder engagement, we conducted a series of workshops with leadership to map out a set of priority areas for the plan, which eventually became our goals and strategies.





### Our Plan at a Glance



### **Our Goals**

**Goal 1:** Accelerate academic growth and achievement for all Two Rivers scholars through high-quality instruction

- A: Re-envision our approach to professional learning to be more differentiated for all staff and have a clear application in their work.
- B: Establish clarity and alignment around the Two Rivers co-teaching model.
- C: Improve interventions and extensions available to students in need of additional support.
- D: Provide targeted mentorship and coaching for school leaders.
- E: Strengthen instructional planning at the classroom level through the use of data.  $\dot{t}$
- F: Revise Two Rivers' approach to educational partnership with families.

### **Goal 2:** Strengthen the Two Rivers **culture of crew** to support our whole community

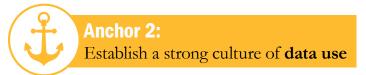
- A: Design and implement a comprehensive framework for a positive school culture and climate that is grounded in adult and student crew; reflective of Two Rivers' commitment to Responsive Classroom and restorative justice practices; and supports all students in achieving across EL Education's three dimensions of student achievement.
- B: Improve systems for talent management to ensure we are recruiting and retaining staff who are deeply connected and committed to our mission and core values.
- C: Ensure all school activities are accessible to all members of the community.

### (Z Goal 3:

### Build sustainable **operational and financial systems** that will support the future of Two Rivers

- A: Define and clearly articulate the values and elements of who we are and align core operational plans and resources.
- B: Conduct long-term financial goals and planning.
- C: Codify and document network practices and procedures that align with staff handbook, charter, and compliance agencies.
- D: Create dynamic school and network wide data dashboards and associated routines to support progress monitoring, external engagement, and decision-making.





indicates connections to the two anchors embedded in the goals above.

### **Our Goals and How We Will Measure Them**

#### Accelerate **academic growth and achievement** for all Two Rivers scholars through high-quality instruction

#### **Metrics:**

**Goal 1** 

**Early Childhood:** Increase percentage of students in K-2 who are growing in Early Literacy Skills as measured by growing at least 3+ encoding microphases each school year in EL Skills Block from 63% (SY 22-23) to 85% (SY 26-27).

**Achievement:** Increase percentage of students in third through eighth-grade who meet or exceed expectations on DC-CAPE and reduce the percentage of students who do not meet expectations.

Measure	Baseline (SY 22-23)	Target (SY 26-27)
ELA level 4+	37%	57%
Math level 4+	27%	44%
ELA level 1	23%	10%
Math level 1	26%	10%

**Growth:** Increase percentage of students from the bottom two quartiles on MAP meeting or exceeding their individualized growth goals in Math and ELA to narrow the achievement gap.

Measure	Baseline (SY 22-23)	Target (SY 26-27)
ELA	44%	72%
Math	39%	67%

**High-quality Work:** 100% of students are able to produce a minimum of two pieces of high-quality work and present their learning at Celebration of Learning each semester at Two Rivers.

### Strengthen the Two Rivers **culture of crew** to support our whole community

#### **Metrics:**

Goal 2:

Staff Retention: Increase percentage of lead teachers who return annually from 65% (SY 23-24) to 85% (SY 26-27).

**Behavior:** Increase percentage of staff who report there are consistent expectations and consequences for student behavior from 27% (SY 23-24) to 50% (SY 26-27) (Insight Survey).

**Belonging:** Increase percentage of students who report a strong sense of belonging from 53% (SY 23-24) to 85% (SY 26-27) (Panorama Survey).



### **Goal 3:** Build sustainable **operational and financial systems** that will support the future of Two Rivers

#### **Metrics:**

Net Income: Increase net operating income (NOI) from 10% (SY 23-24) to 12% (SY 26-27).

Staff Perception: Increase score on Operations domain of Insight Survey from 4.1 (SY 23-24) to 5.5 (SY 26-27).



#### Anchor 1: Engage families as partners

#### **Metrics:**

**Re-enrollment:** Increase percentage of families who choose to re-enroll each year from 80% (SY 22-23) to 90% (SY 26-27), with a focus on the transition years from elementary school to middle school.

**Belonging:** Increase percentage of families who feel a strong sense of connection and belonging at Two Rivers from 89% (SY 23-24) to 95% (SY 26-27) (Family Pulse Survey and Panorama Survey).



#### Anchor 2: Establish a strong culture of data use

#### **Metrics:**

**Staff perception:** Increase percentage of staff who feel we track and use data effectively in our schools from 58% (SY 23-24) to 75% (SY 26-27) (Insight Survey).

### **Goal 1:** Accelerate academic growth and achievement for all Two Rivers scholars through high-quality instruction

**Description:** At Two Rivers, our goal is that students will graduate with the necessary cognitive and social skills to succeed in high school, college, and career. We ensure this through high-quality instruction that is rigorous, differentiated, and engaging, so that every scholar receives the challenge and support they need to thrive. By fostering a dynamic learning environment where curiosity is nurtured and learning is relevant and meaningful, we empower scholars to reach their full potential and become lifelong learners.

#### Strategies:

•

14

### A: Re-envision our approach to professional learning to be more differentiated for all staff and have a clear application in their work.

*Definition of success:* Instructional and non-instructional staff receive high-quality, differentiated, and engaging professional development that is well-planned, informed by data, tailored to their needs, and leverages the experience of Two Rivers' crew members as experts.

B: Establish clarity and alignment around the Two Rivers co-teaching model.

*Definition of success:* All staff understand our co-teaching model and teachers collaborate seamlessly to provide varied instruction, flexible grouping, individualized support, and a positive, inclusive environment that is informed by data and enhanced by professional growth. Students in a successful co-teaching classroom will feel supported, engaged, and valued, experiencing a positive, inclusive environment that fosters confidence in their learning abilities and encourages active participation.

#### Improve extensions and interventions available to students in need of additional support.

*Definition of success:* Two Rivers provides high quality extensions and interventions with fidelity by ensuring teachers and leaders are trained in differentiating their instructional practice and equipped with the planning time and resources they need to tailor their lessons to groups and individual students. All students are appropriately supported and challenged in meeting and exceeding their goals to do more than they thought possible.

#### D: Provide targeted mentorship and coaching for school leaders.

*Definition of success:* School leaders feel supported and empowered to drive positive change in their schools. Leaders are regularly in classrooms providing targeted feedback and have a strong knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and their team. Leaders receive personalized guidance and feedback tailored to their specific needs and goals, enabling them to enhance their instructional leadership, foster a positive school culture, and achieve organizational excellence.

#### $\pm$ Strengthen instructional planning at the classroom level through the use of data. $\pm$

*Definition of Success:* Teachers have the knowledge and ability to calibrate on what High Quality Work (HQW) looks like and to adjust instructional practice and crew culture so that all students can access and produce HQW. They engage in a regular practice of looking at their students' data with peers and leaders in structures like coaching and common planning time (CPT).

#### 👖 Revise Two Rivers' approach to educational partnership with families. 📩

*Definition of Success:* Families receive the guidance, communication, voice, and resources they need to engage as strong partners to Two Rivers in supporting their students' learning. Family relationships with teachers and other school staff are high in trust and enable families to understand their students' progress, support areas for growth and acceleration, and celebrate accomplishments.

### Goal 2: Strengthen the Two Rivers culture of crew to support our whole community

**Description:** At Two Rivers, we believe in the power of authentic community and our culture of crew embodies this belief. As a school community, we have a shared mission, goal, vision for race and equity, and scholarly habits that inform how we treat one another, approach challenges, make decisions, resolve conflict, and integrate many other components of culture. Grounded in EL Education, crew means that we are actively working together as a team to build this community - we are crew, not passengers. Our goal is to strengthen this culture of crew – not only among our students but across our entire community. By harnessing this collective force that uplifts, empowers, and celebrates each member, students and adults in our community will feel valued, supported, and included, and they will ultimately remain invested in our community and do more than they thought possible.

#### Strategies:

A: Design and implement a comprehensive framework for a positive school culture and climate that is grounded in adult and student crew and supports all students in achieving across EL Education's three dimensions of student achievement.

*Definition of success:* Two Rivers nurtures and celebrates the Scholarly Habits across adult and student interactions. All staff participate in crew activities across the network and at each campus, modeling among staff the sense of belonging that we want our students to have. All grade levels use routines that build students' sense of crew and help them restore when community norms and expectations are broken. Students experience consistent, age-appropriate adult practices and responses that foster all students' success across EL Education's three dimensions of student achievement: mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high quality work.

Improve systems for talent management to ensure we are recruiting and retaining staff who are deeply connected and committed to our mission and core values.

*Definition of success:* Two Rivers builds a community of professionals who are dedicated to upholding our core values while celebrating the talents, skills, and experience of all staff. New staff receive scaffolded building blocks around Two Rivers culture and methods that lay a strong foundation for their success and growth. All staff are supported in their development of leadership, professional, and social-emotional skills to create a caring, motivated, and passionate team.

Ensure the school experience is accessible to all members of the community.

*Definition of success:* Two Rivers' core value of giving access along with our commitment to equity and fostering a strong sense of crew is reflected in our approach to communicating, planning, and implementing the school experience, including school activities and events. All members of our community - students, families, and staff - are reflected in the diversity of opportunities offered and can access the experience provided by our schools.

### **Goal 3:** Build sustainable **operational and financial systems** that will support the future of Two Rivers

**Description:** At Two Rivers, we're committed to laying a strong foundation for the future by enhancing our operational and financial systems. Our goal is to build robust systems that ensure the long-term sustainability of our schools by connecting plans for our program model, student recruitment and enrollment, fundraising, and staffing with critical financial planning and modeling. Coordinated, long-term financial and operational planning will be complemented by comprehensive and user-friendly operating procedures and data dashboards that support routine progress monitoring. The result will be a tight coupling of the plans for Two Rivers' future and the resources needed to make it possible.

#### Strategies:

### Define and clearly articulate the values and elements of who we are and align core operational plans and resources.

Definition of success: Two Rivers operates from a shared understanding of our mission, goal, and core values and that understanding is intentionally translated into policies and practices that attract and retain staff and families to the organization. Resources are optimized to effectively support both educators and students in achieving Two Rivers' mission and goal, including by analyzing staffing configurations to ensure that roles are strategically placed to address specific needs within the school community. Operational plans address staff and student recruitment, use of space, and partnership engagement for resources outside of Two Rivers.

#### Conduct long-term financial goals and planning.

*Definition of success:* The Two Rivers Board of Trustees and network leaders are aligned with the network's future direction and the finances required to support it, including developing financial modeling tools. A financial decision-making protocol is established to assess new initiatives and their alignment with TR's direction and investment opportunities. The role of development, including both grants and private giving, and investments is clearly articulated. Finally, budget planning occurs with a two- to three-year planning lens.

### Codify and document network practices and procedures that align with staff handbook, charter, and compliance agencies.

*Definition of success:* Staff access dynamic, online operations manuals for all departments, including annual content update schedules to ensure current and searchable information, and find consistent answers and guidance. The staff onboarding process includes ensuring access to relevant manuals and the manuals are used by all staff as a critical component of knowledge management in the organization, lessening the burden on operational staff and the toll of staff turnover.

### Create dynamic school and network-wide data dashboards and associated routines to support progress monitoring, external engagement, and decision-making.

*Definition of Success:* Comprehensive and dynamic data dashboards display relevant metrics from across the organization at the school and network level, including enrollment, achievement, and school climate data. Data is used to inform key decisions, monitor progress on key goals, and inform accountability systems. Leaders have a clear pulse on the state of our schools and the success of our students and are positioned to communicate with families, staff, funders, and other key stakeholders about Two Rivers through the lens of student outcomes.



#### Anchor 1: Engage families as partners

*Definition of success:* Families receive the guidance and resources needed to engage as strong partners to Two Rivers in supporting their students' learning. Family relationships with teachers and other school staff are high in trust and enable families to understand their students' progress, support growth areas, and celebrate accomplishments. Families are provided with clear, accessible data and information about their child's learning and know what communication and engagement opportunities they can expect. Family engagement reflects the diversity of the Two Rivers community and our commitment to being an inclusive and equitable school organization.



#### Anchor 2: Establish a strong culture of data use

Definition of success: All stakeholders - students, staff, leaders, and families - have access to data and related tools that help them engage in a regular practice of reviewing, sharing, and attuning their planning to measures of student success. Students feel comfortable sharing and talking about their data with their family, peers, and staff and articulate their progress using data throughout the year. Teachers collect and use data to inform their practice with students and regularly review data with their students and other staff using consistent data routines and meeting structures. School leaders have tools and knowledge to understand and apply data analyses to be attuned to the culture and instructional needs of their staff. Finally, network leaders have the information needed to support school leaders in accomplishing their work plans and to progress monitor network wide goals, such as financial sustainability.

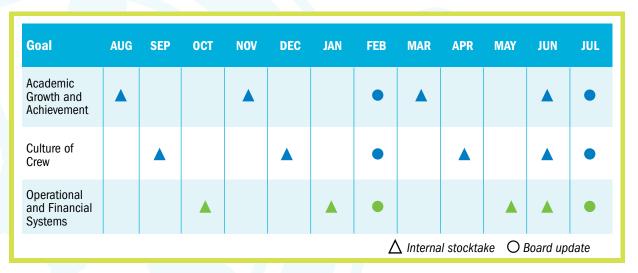


### **Progress Monitoring**

Any good plan requires a system for monitoring if it is to actually result in real change. To that end, we are committed to running a set of progress monitoring routines that will allow our leadership to sit down regularly and engage in targeted problem-solving discussions about implementation of the goals and strategies outlined above.

During these routines, we will use the data dashboard from goal 3 to ensure that we remain focused on the most recent available data on the goal and progress measures and dive into key challenges.

We will also share updates with the board and public on a regular basis around progress toward goals, in a format that will look something like this:





### **Our Appreciation**

This process involved a significant investment of time from our already busy community and we are grateful. We believe this final product is a reflection of the deep commitment of our community to working together to build a better Two Rivers. Thank you to all who contributed their time and energy to the development of this plan, and to those who will continue to contribute to the successful implementation of the plan.

A special shout out to the members of our Strategic Planning Advisory Committee who shepherded the process:

Tahira Ben-Anxi, TR Parent (YES)

Laura Lindamood, TR Parent (4ES, YES, and TRMS) Shawntika Johnson, Lead Teacher (4ES) Ashley Taliaferro, Lead Teacher (YES) Elle Carne, TR Board Member

Lauren Edwards, TR Board Member

Belicia Reaves, Executive Director

Aqueelha James, Chief Academic Officer

Aurora Steinle, Chief of Staff

Corey Gordon, Founder & CEO of DeliverEd







#### Somos el Barco

Somos el barco, somos el mar Yo navego en ti, tu navegas en mi We are the boat, we are the sea I sail in you, you sail in me

The stream sings it to the river, the river sings it to the sea The sea sings it to the boat that carries you and me

Somos el barco, somos el mar Yo navego en ti, tu navegas en mi We are the boat, we are the sea I sail in you, you sail in me

The boat we are sailing in was built by many hands And the sea we are sailing on, it touches every land

Somos el barco, somos el mar Yo navego en ti, tu navegas en mi We are the boat, we are the sea I sail in you, you sail in me

So with our hopes we set the sails and face the winds once more And with our hearts we chart the waters never sailed before

Somos el barco, somos el mar Yo navego en ti, tu navegas en mi We are the boat, we are the sea I sail in you, you sail in me We are the boat, we are the sea I sail in you, you sail in me

> Two Rivers Public Charter School 1227 4th Street NE Washington, DC 20002 www.tworiverspcs.org

> > 0



@tworiverspcs

@tworiverspcs