

Tax Levy Success! Sharing Your District Story & Priorities

Meramec Valley R-III
School District



Introductions

- Dr. Carrie Schwierjohn, Superintendent
- Dr. Ketina Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent
- Mr. Tom Sauvage, Assistant Superintendent



Presentation Outline

- District Overview & Financial Background
- Prioritization Process
- Tax Levy Communication Plan & Telling Our Story
- Questions

District Overview & Financial Background



Meramec Valley R-III School District

- **Enrollment:** PreK-12th grades- 3,000 students
- **Staff:** 490 staff
- **Location:** 35 miles to downtown St. Louis
- **Schools:** 1 PreK, 5 Elementary, 1 Intermediate, 1 Middle, and 1 High School
- **Assessed Valuation:** \$445,621,463.
- **Tax Rate in 2022-23:** \$4.18 (\$3.30 Operating & \$0.88 Debt Service)

How are Operating Funds Spent?

Uses	General Fund	Special Revenue	%
Salaries	\$ 7,064,663.87	\$ 17,753,032.39	65.37%
Employee Benefits	\$ 2,157,019.42	\$ 5,047,538.10	18.98%
Purchase Services	\$ 2,174,744.80	\$ 820,012.33	7.89%
Supplies	\$ 2,949,711.69	\$ -	7.77%
Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Other Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 14,346,139.78</u>	<u>\$ 23,620,582.82</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

84.35% of Operating Expenditures are Staff Salaries & Benefits

Historical Review of Operating Funds

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Revenues	\$ 34,118,868.00	\$ 34,918,296.00	\$ 36,982,464.00	\$ 38,346,745.00
Percent Increase		2.3%	5.6%	3.6%
Expenditures	\$ 33,730,031.00	\$ 36,656,374.00	\$ 37,966,722.00	\$ 40,866,091.00
Percent Increase		8.0%	3.5%	7.1%
Fund Balance Deficit		\$ (1,738,078.00)	\$ (984,258.00)	\$ (2,519,346.00)

Factors Impacting Rising Operating Costs

- **Rising cost of minimum wage**
 - In 2022, the district raised the starting support staff pay to \$14.00 per hour
- **Rising cost of living**
 - The district provided a \$500 increase to the base salary schedule annually (on average a 2-5% increase)
- **Rising cost of staff/retiree health insurance**

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Insurance Premium Annual Increase	8%	11%	18%	24%

Foundation Formula: State Adequacy Target (Amount Paid Per Pupil by State)

YEAR	Calc SAT	Paid SAT	% Change
2009	\$ 6,117	\$ 6,117	0.0%
2010	\$ 6,117	\$ 6,117	0.0%
2011	\$ 6,124	\$ 6,124	0.1%
2012	\$ 6,131	\$ 6,131	0.1%
2013	\$ 6,423	\$ 6,131	4.8%
2014	\$ 6,716	\$ 6,131	4.6%
2015	\$ 6,580	\$ 6,131	-2.0%
2016	\$ 6,580	\$ 6,145	0.0%
2017	\$ 6,241	\$ 6,199	-5.2%
2018	\$ 6,241	\$ 6,241	0.0%
2019	\$ 6,308	\$ 6,308	1.1%
2020	\$ 6,375	\$ 6,375	1.1%
2021	\$ 6,375	\$ 6,375	0.0%
2022	\$ 6,375	\$ 6,375	0.0%
2023	\$ 6,375	\$ 6,375	0.0%
2024	\$ 6,375	\$ 6,375	0.0%

SAT has increased 4.2% in total in the last 15 years.

What is the Impact of an Operating Levy Increase?

\$0.56 Operating Levy Increase Decided

Resident Assessed Value	Tax Levy
	\$ 0.56
\$ 100,000.00	\$ 106.40
\$ 125,000.00	\$ 133.00
\$ 150,000.00	\$ 159.60
\$ 175,000.00	\$ 186.20
\$ 200,000.00	\$ 212.80
\$ 225,000.00	\$ 239.40
\$ 250,000.00	\$ 266.00

District Assessed Value Range	Tax Levy				
	\$ 0.56	\$ 0.66	\$ 0.76	\$ 0.86	\$ 0.96
\$ 450,000,000.00	\$ 2,520,000.00	\$ 2,970,000.00	\$ 3,420,000.00	\$ 3,870,000.00	\$ 4,320,000.00
\$ 472,500,000.00	\$ 2,646,000.00	\$ 3,118,500.00	\$ 3,591,000.00	\$ 4,063,500.00	\$ 4,536,000.00

History of MVR3 Operating Levy & Debt Levy

Date	Amount	Description	For	Against	Total	% of Yes Votes	Outcome
11/6/1979	\$ 0.30	Operating Levy	950	721	1671	56.85%	Passed
2/5/1985	\$ 3,000,000.00	Bond Issue	881	217	1098	80.24%	Passed
4/4/1989	\$ 3,100,000.00	Bond Issue	1019	465	1484	68.67%	Passed
6/4/1991	\$ 0.48	Operating Levy	1024	565	1589	64.44%	Passed
2/8/1994	\$ 2,100,000.00	Bond Issue	1141	344	1485	76.84%	Passed
4/2/1996	\$ 5,900,000.00	Bond Issue	1331	531	1862	71.48%	Passed
11/3/1998	\$ 6,500,000.00	Bond Issue	2889	1874	4763	60.66%	Passed
11/3/1998	\$ 0.48	Operating Levy	2326	2417	4743	49.04%	Failed
2/2/1999	\$ 0.48	Operating Levy	1168	1240	2408	48.50%	Failed
2/8/2000	\$ 0.19	Operating Levy	1609	1171	2780	57.88%	Passed
11/7/2002	\$ 14,200,000.00	Bond Issue	4264	1948	6212	68.64%	Passed
8/5/2003	\$ 0.45	Operating Levy	675	1197	1872	36.06%	Failed
4/6/2004	\$ 0.43	Operating Levy	1808	1332	3140	57.58%	Passed
4/6/2010	\$ 15,310,000.00	Bond Issue	2042	909	2951	69.20%	Passed
4/4/2017	\$ 11,750,000.00	Bond Issue	1976	554	2530	78.10%	Passed
4/6/2021	\$ 17,900,000.00	Bond Issue	861	262	1123	76.67%	Passed

Stakeholder Prioritization Process



Operating Budget: Analysis Plan

GOAL:

- Finding efficiencies in programs/departments by analyzing Return on Investment
- While optimizing staff through attrition
- Demonstrate to all stakeholders that a thorough analysis and audit had been completed prior to going to the voters for an increase

PLAN:

- ROI survey to staff, and financial audit of every department & program
- Educating all stakeholders on Bond vs. Levy, budget, and needs
- Prioritization meetings with all stakeholders
- Telling the student, staff, community story regarding need & values of shared priorities

Return on Investment (ROI): Prioritization Survey

MVR-III BUDGET ANALYSIS SURVEY

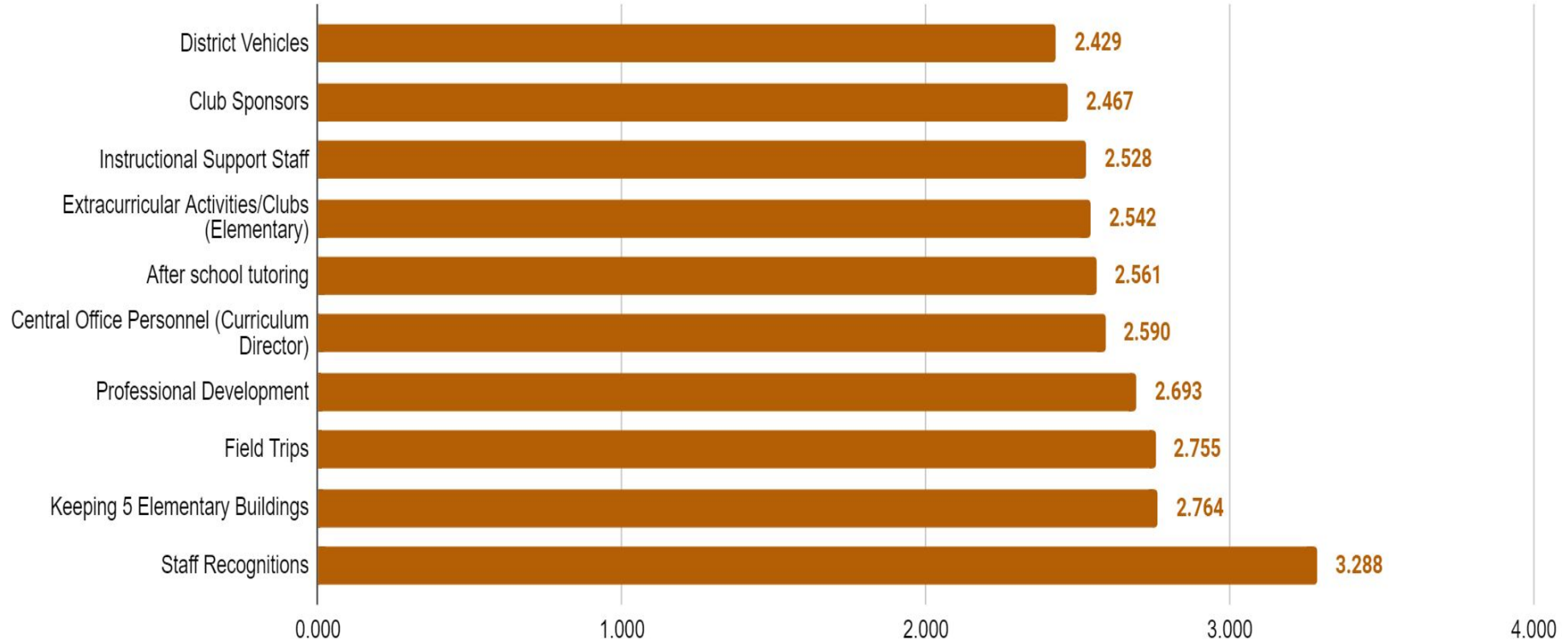
This survey requires your response and opinion about the way the Meramec Valley R-III School District spends money. The results of this survey may be used, along with other information, to assist the District in developing spending priorities for future planning.

Please identify yourself as one of the following: *

- Parent
- Administrator
- Student
- Certified Staff
- Support Staff

Staff Survey Results: Bottom 10 Priorities

LOWEST STAFF PRIORITIES

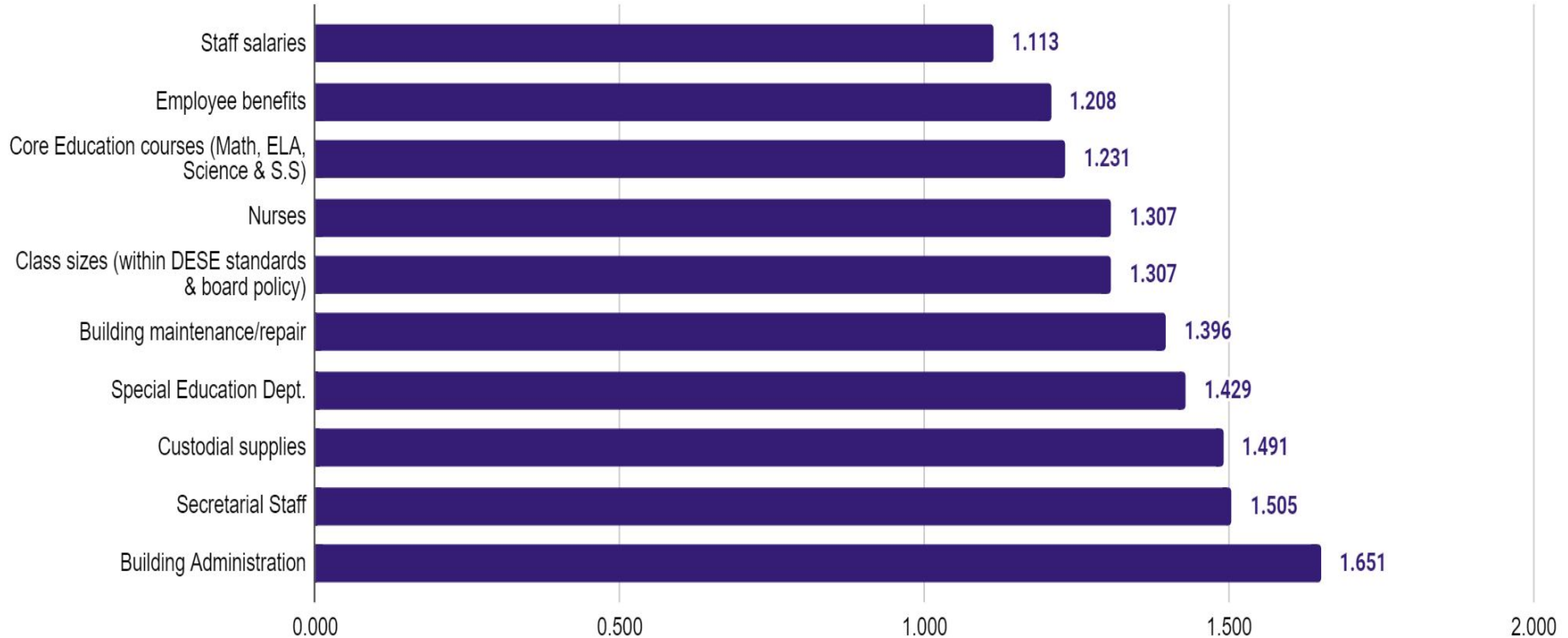


Return on Investment (ROI): Prioritization Survey

1= High Priority-----4= Low Priority	STAFF AVERAGE RESPONSE	TOTAL SCORE	21-22 EXPENDITURES	21-22 REVENUES	Difference in Savings	Return on Investment: Number of Students Impacted by Program
Staff salaries	1.113	236	\$25,031,978.74			
Employee fringe benefits (Health & dental insurance co	1.208	256	\$2,959,390.61			
Core Education courses (Math, ELA, Science & S.S)	1.231	261				2903
Nurses	1.307	277	\$456,754.16			3079
Class sizes (within DESE standards & board policy)	1.307	277				
Building maintenance/repair supplies & equipment	1.396	296	\$162,057.03			
Special Education Dept. (Dept. budget & staff)	1.429	303	\$3,644,749.81	\$861,216.50	-\$2,783,533.31	500
Custodial supplies (cleaning supplies & equipment)	1.491	316	\$122,257.86			
Secretarial Staff (Building and dept. admin assistants)	1.505	319	\$1,002,345.49			
Building Administration (Principals & Asst. Principals)	1.651	350	\$2,122,799.72			
Food Service Program (Dept. budget & staff)	1.679	356	\$1,917,619.93	\$1,968,542.95	\$50,923.02	
Physical Education	1.679	356	\$915,670.32			3079
Copy equipment and paper	1.698	360	\$82,235.24			
Art Education	1.736	368	\$526,100.03			2258
Vocational Education (Four Rivers Career Center)	1.736	368	\$233,146.24			60
Classroom supplies	1.745	370	\$382,926.79			3079
Classroom technology and instructional software	1.755	372	\$392,654.64			
Guidance Counseling Program	1.755	372	\$798,156.12			2903
Industrial Education	1.759	373	\$50,914.98			156
Technology Dept. (Dept. budget & staff)	1.774	376	\$1,329,711.87			
Music Education (Band & supplies)	1.774	376	\$807,572.12			1864
Computer Education courses	1.783	378	\$157,948.83			

Staff Survey Results: Top 10 Priorities

TOP TEN STAFF PRIORITIES



Return on Investment (ROI): Prioritization Survey

1= High Priority-----4= Low Priority	STAFF AVERAGE RESPONSE	TOTAL SCORE	21-22 EXPENDITURES	21-22 REVENUES	Difference in Savings	Return on Investment: Number of Students Impacted by Program
Central Office Personnel (HR/Core data specialist)	2.193	465	\$52,779.18			
Alternative Education Program (Program budget & staff)	2.198	466	\$337,315.64			69
Central Office Personnel	2.236	474	\$745,914.59			
Elective course offerings (JAG)	2.245	476	\$240,527.52	\$166,600.00	-\$73,927.52	441
Parents As Teachers (Program budget & staff)	2.288	485	\$69,568.00	\$47,700.00	-\$21,868.00	112
Staff mileage reimbursement for travel	2.349	498	\$31,218.00			
Elective course offerings (PLTW)	2.373	503	\$159,226.75			556
Off-campus college courses at St. Louis Community C	2.382	505	\$137,705.59			30
District provided Summer School	2.401	509	\$609,835.11	\$1,013,884.00	\$404,048.89	1329
Furniture (desks, chairs, tables & cabinets)	2.410	511	\$95,609.69			
Extracurricular Activities/Clubs (Intermediate)	2.420	513	\$8,152.44			
Bus transportation within 1 mile of school (not required)	2.425	514	\$28,890.00			365
District Vehicles (Transportation, maintenance & district)	2.429	515	\$4,719.85			
Instructional Support Staff (Instr./Sped Coaches & Merit)	2.528	536	\$259,008.32			
Extracurricular Activities/Clubs (Elementary)	2.542	539	\$16,744.34			
After school tutoring	2.561	543	\$31,370.74	\$31,370.74	\$0.00	200
Central Office Personnel (Curriculum Director)	2.590	549	\$137,303.92			
Professional Development (Non-federal or state spending)	2.693	571	\$142,613.45			
Field Trips (Transportation)	2.755	584	\$117,720.00			1064
Keeping 5 Elementary Buildings (not consolidating sites)	2.764	586				
Staff Recognitions (Budget for shirts, plaques, etc.)	3.288	697	\$18,399.00			500

Phase 2 Efficiencies

2023-24 PHASE 2 ATTRITION & EFFICIENCIES		
PROGRAM	SAVINGS	PERCENT
Recognition Reduction	\$10,000.00	50%
Elementary Extracurriculars Reduction	\$2,500.00	15%
ECP Book Reduction	\$30,000.00	36%
Field Trip Reductions	\$29,430.00	20%
Classroom Tech Supplies/Software	\$75,000.00	15%
Pacific Intermediate Extracurriculars Reduction	\$1,200.00	36%
Library Books/Supplies	\$25,000.00	
Preschool Tuition Rate/Enrollment Increase	\$197,000.00	
SACC Rate Increase	\$50,000.00	
5-12 Electives Teacher Attrition (JAG)	\$55,000.00	33%
5-12 Electives Teacher Attrition (Music)	\$75,000.00	
Curriculum Director Attrition	\$110,366.00	
SACC Coordinator Coleman Attrition	\$43,745.00	
Special Education Teacher Attrition	\$66,590.00	
Health Occ. Teacher Attrition	\$80,000.00	
K-5th Teacher Attrition (3)	\$196,988.00	
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$1,047,819.00	

Phase 3: Possible Programs & Personnel Reductions

2024-25 PHASE 3 EFFICIENCIES & REDUCTIONS		
PROGRAM	SAVINGS	PERCENT
Alternative School Reduction (5-8th & Sped)	\$134,753.00	40%
Instructional Coaches (3)	\$259,008.00	100%
JROTC	\$60,000.00	50%
Extracurricular (8-12) Reduction(Sports,Band,Choir	\$100,000.00	30%
Parent Educator Attrition/Reduction	\$30,000.00	43%
SACC Coordinator DHELC or Centralized SACC	\$50,000.00	10%
Building Aides	\$109,819.00	50%
Elementary Teacher Attrition (1)	\$65,000.00	
Early College Program	\$67,000.00	50%
PLTW (K-12)	\$79,613.00	50%
Secondary Teacher Attrition (1)	\$75,000.00	
JAG Program & Student Coffee Shop (6-12)	\$185,527.00	66%
Central Office Personnel	\$52,779.00	
Foreign Language Course Offerings	\$65,000.00	
Votech Four Rivers Program	\$116,573.00	50%
Curriculum/Textbook budget	\$100,000.00	30%
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$1,550,072.00	

Tax Levy Increase Positives & Challenges

August 2023

Positives:

- Ability to better plan 2024-25 budget and analyze Phase 3 needs
- Ability to pivot/plan for future tax levy initiative if needed (if failed)
- More time between levy increase and future bond initiative
- If approved, funds would be available for the 23-24 fiscal year
- Ability to maintain (AA-) bond rating which impacts interest rates on bonds

Challenges:

- Quick turnaround time on communication strategy & plan
- Less access to staff & families during summer months for communication

Tax Levy Increase Positives & Challenges

November 2023

Positives:

- More time for planning and communication
- Ability to pivot/plan for future tax levy initiative if needed (if failed)

Challenges:

- Funds would not be available until the 2024-25 budget
- Percentage of fund balances will fall below 25%
- Bond rating will be impacted by lower fund balances
- Delay future bond initiatives
- Different political atmosphere in November elections

Operating Budget: Analysis Plan Goals

- Finding efficiencies in programs/departments by analyzing Return on Investment
- While optimizing staff through attrition

	PHASE 1 Analysis & Efficiencies	PHASE 2 Analysis & Efficiencies	PHASE 3 Possible Reductions
District Analysis & Efficiency Plan	5 Teaching positions 1 Central office admin position 10 Support staff positions	7 Teaching positions 1 Central office admin position 1 support staff position Tuition Increases (SACC & PreK)	Student Activities, Programs & Personnel Reductions
Amount Reduced	\$559,446.00	\$1,047,819.00	\$1,550,172.00

Tax Levy: Ballot Language



District Priorities for Operating Funds:

- Maintain student learning, programs, and activities;
- Attract and retain high quality staff and essential workers

Communication Plan & Telling Our Story



Tax Levy Communication Plan

- Identify key stakeholders
- Citizen's for Prop E Committee
- Identify important community events and opportunities for sharing your district information and story
- Who tells your story?



Ballot language: maintain student programs and activities; and to attract & retain high quality staff



What is the difference between Operating and Debt Service Funds?

OPERATING LEVY: **Learning**

DEBT SERVICE BONDS: **Building**

<https://www.wevideo.com/view/2964462885>

Communication Schedule & Website

[Students sharing our priorities](#)

[Staff sharing our priorities](#)

[Students sharing our programs and success](#)

Dedicated webpage:

<https://www.mvr3.k12.mo.us/page/proposition-e>

Student Views on MVR-III Programs

Early College Program



Four Rivers Career Center Vocational Program



Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)



Marine Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps





*Together We Make A
Difference in Doing
What's Best for Kids!*



Questions ?

