

Rilke Schule German School of Art & Science



Strategic Plan (2017-2022)

Primary Author: APC Performance Chair Givey Kochanowski (2013-2017)

Table of Content

<p>1 Mission</p> <p>1 Vision</p> <p>1 Values</p> <p>1 Our Priorities</p> <p>1 Goals</p> <p>1 History</p> <p>2 Overview</p> <p>3 Strategic Target Areas</p> <p>3 Strategic Competencies</p> <p>4 People <i>(Performance – Human Relations)</i></p> <p>5 Knowledge <i>(Performance – Ethics and Inquiries)</i></p> <p>6 Operational Excellence <i>(Principal)</i></p>	<p>8 Logistics <i>(Support – Supply/Support and Safety/Security)</i></p> <p>9 Planning <i>(Strategic Planning – Planning and Development)</i></p> <p>10 Effective Communication <i>(Principal and Communication Team)</i></p> <p>11 Infrastructure <i>(Support-Infrastructure)</i></p> <p>12 Resource Management <i>(Strategic Planning – Budget/Finance)</i></p> <p>13 Self-Reflection <i>(Performance – Evaluations and Analysis)</i></p>
---	---

Mission:

Produce engaged world citizens and lifelong learners in English and German.

Vision:

To be the premier K-8 German Immersion school in the nation and a top-rated Alaskan school.

Values:

Respect/Respekt

Integrity/Integrität

Leadership/Leistung

Kindness/Kameradschaft

Excellence/Einsatz

Our Priorities:

STUDENTS	We value our students and their productive learning environment.
STAFF	We value our staff, which facilitates the productive learning environment.
FREEDOM	We value our freedom to self-govern and innovate as an immersion and charter school.
CULTURE	We value our love of learning and German.
SUSTAINABILITY	We value our financial and program sustainability.

Our Goals:

1. Expand learning opportunities for our students.
2. Develop and retain effective staff for student achievement.
3. Empower the Rilke Schule community's ownership of its success.
4. Promote global citizenship through learning German-speaking culture.
5. Advocate aggressively for our school.

History:

Rilke Schule was founded by a small community of parents and educators, and first opened in 2007 with 184 students. The school grew each year and rapidly expanded enrollment. After three moves, Rilke Schule built a permanent campus in 2015 to accommodate a potential of 520 students. The school conducts half of its instruction in German and the balance in English. Rilke Schule has been recognized for its academic excellence by several bodies including the American Association for the Teachers of German. Through its internationally acclaimed performance, Rilke Schule earned the Anchorage School District a Friend of German designation, the first in the nation.

Overview:

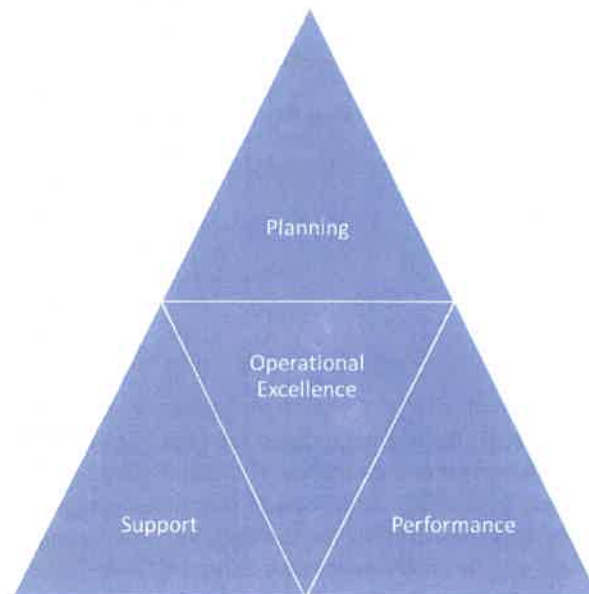
This strategic plan provides the overarching linkage among the Charter, Bylaws, mission, vision, values and priorities of the school. These guiding documents provide context and authority for the actions and policy positions articulated in this document. The school goals are directly derived from the priorities of this school, the hallmark five factors that make Rilke Schule a shining star in Alaska and across the country as a premier German immersion school.

As a charter school, equally concerned with student outcomes and Charter compliance, this plan rests on two keystones – Strategic Governance and Operational Excellence – to ensure both outcomes are exceeded. Strategic Governance is the role of the Academic Policy Committee, hereon referred to as the Board of Directors (Directors). It is the operating link between the school and the Anchorage School Board which authorized and approved the Charter. The Directors' primary charge is charter compliance and overall strategic governance, which includes planning, for the school. The four core functions of the Board of Directors are 1) hire & evaluate the principal 2) approve and be responsible for the school budget 3) create and adhere to the policies of the school, the rules by which we live and 4) approve curriculum. Operational Excellence (academic leadership and school business management) is the

realm and purview of the Principal. The Principal is the only staff member employed by the Directors and is the conduit to the ASD employees who teach and support the students of Rilke Schule. The Principal and staff accomplish all nine strategic competencies with Operational Excellence as the core component.

This strategic plan shall serve as the authoritative forward guidance for the Directors, Principal, and staff. All school activities shall have a clear linkage to the plan. This applies both to school hours and after-hours Rilke-sponsored activities. Other Rilke organizations and clubs may have complimentary strategic plans and procedures in the understanding that this is the official position of the school, its Directors, and Principal. All Rilke supporting organizations are expected to work at the direction of the Principal and in full cooperation with the Directors to ensure unity of effort and successful implementation of this plan and the school's policies.

This plan shall be reviewed by the Directors and Principal annually, with a five-year thorough review and reauthorization cycle. Pen and ink changes for minor updates, where intent or outcome is not affected, are allowed. Other out of cycle changes follow Rilke Policy 010 - Policies for readings and process.



Strategic Target Areas

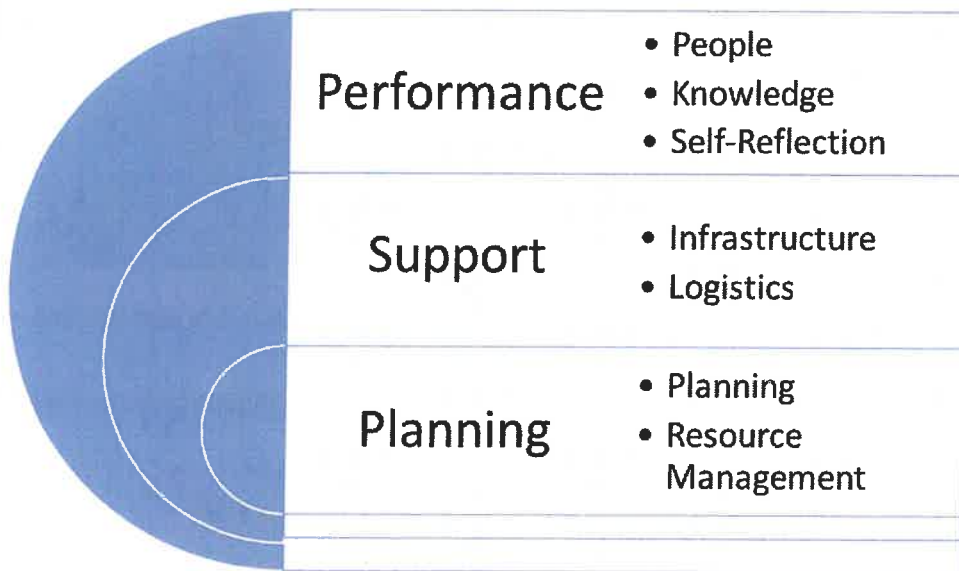
Unlike a neighborhood, community school, Rilke’s strategic plan operates with the Directors as the governing body. In this unique status, the Directors are the lowest echelon of elected office in Alaska as set forth in statute. The Directors share some operational functions with the Anchorage School District such as some financial management functions, procurement, human resources (executed by the Principal), and Public Affairs in the school’s website. Consequently the strategic target areas of this plan are a blend of those of a neighborhood school and the Anchorage School Board and District at large. The Target Areas also are the three standing committees established in the Bylaws.

Strategic Competencies

Each Strategic Target Area rests on its core competencies. Each competency springs forth from the Rilke Schule Bylaws and/or Charter and is encapsulated into policy and practice through fully staffed standing committees or team. Each Strategic Competency preempts Operational Excellence in the execution of the direction articulated through Strategic Governance. Each competency has key performance indicators.

1. People
2. Knowledge
3. Self-Reflection
4. Operational Excellence*
5. Infrastructure
6. Logistics
7. Planning
8. Effective Communication*
9. Resource Management

**These Strategic Competencies are outside bylaw-established committees*



People

(Performance – Human Relations)

Rilke Schule's strongest asset is its people. The first two of the school's priorities are students and staff. Rilke's People Strategic Competency primarily intends to build a successful and harmonious community of learning. High student outcomes and high retention of quality staff are desired outcomes from this competency. Rilke is in somewhat of a niche market as a German immersion program. Losing students in this language-acquisition-based program translates into permanent losses in enrollment and funding if students leave the program, as very rarely are upper-grade, new-to-Rilke students able to test into the program. Similar, maintaining a pipeline of interested German teaching talent is difficult in Alaska due to the small population and licensing challenges for international teachers. Also unique to a charter, parent volunteer hours are critical to the success of the school. Effective volunteerism and management are functions shared among the Principal, Staff, Directors, and PTO. This whole team, the Rilke Community, is integral to Rilke Schule's vibrancy and culture.

Enduring Actions

- Ensure a total student enrollment near, but not exceeding 520 students K-8
- Maintain up to a 150-student enrollment in Kindergarten and First Grade, possibly alternating years between three and four sections of Kindergarten.
- Ensure a balanced staff in terms of experience and projected departures
- Accomplish on-time expectations and evaluations of staff
- Apply parent and staff feedback in annual reviews to establish accountability
- Sponsor annual student and staff recruiting campaigns
- Establish a standing roster of interested qualified staff seeking to join the Rilke team
- Recognized student performance in Quarterly Awards Ceremonies
- Establish a three-year staff professional development cycle for staff
- Promote and support established guest teacher/internship program for native German-speaking interns from Germany, Austria and Switzerland
- Ensure meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities for parents

Discrete Actions

- Establish a BPO position
- Establish a Business Operations/Vice Principal position befitting a school of 520 students
- Establish a Volunteer Coordinator position

Knowledge

(Performance – Ethics and Inquiries)

Community economic trends and intelligence are critical to Rilke Schule's operation. This information helps forecast community interest, support, and student enrollment. General intelligence for the school across all sectors of the economy are needed to seek school business partners, cooperative agreements, and other sustaining arrangements. Maintaining a strong, working knowledge and network with Anchorage School District senior staff is equally essential knowledge for Rilke's success. Knowledge is community capital. The Inquiries capabilities of this Standing Committee serves as the Rilke research function.

Enduring Actions

- Maintain Anchorage School Board relationships (Directors)
- Expand relationship with the German Mission to the United States
- Conduct annual Board of Visitors functions and strategically add members to that board
- Ensure quarterly relationship maintenance (at a minimum) with Anchorage School District senior staff in Rilke-impacting or benefiting positions such as Facility Maintenance, Human Resources, Public Affairs, World Languages, Finance and Procurement)

Discrete Actions

- Establish relationship with Anchorage Chamber of Commerce (Principal)
- Develop and fund standing membership with key educational trade groups that advance Rilke's mission (immersion, foreign language, German, Art, Science, etc.)
- Encourage staff members to participate on district teams for curriculum alignment
- Review, update and maintain business partnerships

Operational Excellence

(Principal)

The operational excellence competency connects the strategic vision of this document to the daily operational management and running of the school. While all the other competencies are shared between the Directors and Principal, this one by virtue of being operational rests solely with the Principal and staff. For a detailed description and definition of how the Directors provide quality assurance on this competency, please reference Charter Annex A and/or Rilke Policy 004 Principal Evaluation. The duties and performance standards set forth in the performance review evaluation define the aspirations of this document turned action by the Principal. The key performance indicators below are strictly academic and what a community, neighborhood principal would likely have as strategic academic goals. A charter school principal has a much broader set of responsibilities which are reflected in the other eight strategic competencies.

Enduring Actions

- Serve as liaison with Anchorage School District senior staff
- Deliver and maintain strategic competencies, provides continuity for volunteer Directors
- Ensure students at grade-level performance will show 1 quartile of growth in reading and math AIMS web assessments
- Ensure students performing below grade-level will show 1.25 quartile of growth in reading and math AIMS web assessments
- Maintain a 90% or higher Rilke Schule attendance rate
- Implement school approved research based curricula aligned to content standards
- Orchestrate an ongoing, 5-year forward-looking systematic review process to determine if the curriculum addresses the learning needs of all students
- Ensure 80% of 3rd grade students will pass the A1 exam in reading, writing, listening and speaking based on German standards
- Ensure 75% of 6th grade students will pass the A2 exam based on German standards
- Set and attain specific percentages/targets in German Sprachmeister Program
- Recruit teachers through German school partnerships and ASD World Languages
- Utilize formative and summative assessment that are aligned to content standards
- Use a system to plan instructional practices and programs that are aligned with content standards
- Utilize research-based instructional practices, programs, materials
- Utilize effective classroom management strategies
- Embed professional development into daily routines and practices
- All core content teachers will meet the definition of highly qualified

- Use multiple sources of student assessment data as a primary factor in determining professional development
- Implement strategies to attract and retain highly qualified teachers
- Schedule Professional Learning Community (PLC) times to determine academic and behavior gaps through analyzing data
- Utilize teacher assistants during literacy blocks to increase student achievement
- Utilizing Instructional Leaders, Rilke Schule will:
 - Coordinate monitoring, support, and development of instructional/classroom management skills
 - Utilize a team approach to facilitate the implementation of the Rilke Schule Strategic Plan
 - Assist teachers in understanding data from various student assessments to improve instruction
 - Conduct formal/informal observations and provide timely feedback to staff members about their instructional practice
 - Follow ASD evaluation process

Discrete Actions

- Create master schedule that meets the needs of the students
- Develop academic interventions that best meet the needs of students
- Provide relevant professional development opportunities to increase teacher effectiveness (3-year cycle to ensure all staff have opportunities)
- Develop core literacy blocks within the master schedule
- Create inventory of curricula and develop procedures for monitoring curricula inventory
- Provide staff professional development and curricula training on an ongoing basis
- Develop a 5-year technology plan to increase student technology use
- Research and implement assessments to determine gaps in English and German

Logistics

(Support – Supply/Support and Safety/Security)

Cost-efficient and timely support defines Rilke's Sustainability priority. The logistics competency provides the supplies and services necessary to operate within a razor thin charter school margin. Purchases are required to be processed by Anchorage School District's purchasing staff. **While the Directors have decided not to purchase the current facility (see Infrastructure for rationale)**, there remains significant facility service and supply needs for which Rilke Schule is responsible. Likewise, logistics competence includes the safety and security of the people and property. Emergency preparedness is woven across Rilke's guiding documents ranging from the Principal evaluation process to this plan and safety/security purchases.

Supply/Support

Enduring Actions

- Set the most stringent conflict of interest review for contractors
- Establish rigorous quality assurance procedures for product and service contractors
- Time-phase student supply requirements as to not overwhelm storage capacity
- Utilize Donors Choose and related sites or requests for support through a Principal-established process

Discrete Actions

- Terminate or modify all current contracts not in full compliance with Rilke and Anchorage School District standards that may have been grandfathered to bring Rilke into compliance
- Edit school supply list to reduce unnecessary items and spending
- Allow supplies to be brought to school throughout the year
- Develop procedures for purchasing and donations

Safety/Security

Enduring Actions

- Conduct periodic emergency drills for staff and students
- Periodically review School Emergency Plan
- Annually review dismissal procedures

Discrete Actions

- Construct southern property line fence
- Install security system (and cameras as needed)

Planning

(Strategic Planning – Planning and Development)

Rilke Schule endeavored on an atypical path in its planning efforts. Only in its ninth year (2016-17) did it actually develop a strategic plan. The benefit to this reverse model is that all the Charter renewal, Bylaws review, and policies have stood the test of time and now provide context and parameters. Naturally operating without a formal strategic plan unnecessarily complicated operations. This specific competency addresses these long-standing challenges and weaves together the Charter with the Bylaws and Policies to the strategic targets and priorities of this school. The Planning competency gives Rilke a clear and focused forward-looking perspective. The tribulations of the growing years and their associated lessons are the solid planning factors of today. Capital and community development are essential sustaining efforts for Rilke as a charter school and the limited budget it receives per statute.

Planning

Enduring Actions

- Set school-year calendar with Directors, Principal, and non-profits by September
- Preserve fundraising effectiveness by Principal leadership in Rilke Policy 002
- Utilize Donors Chose and related sites or requests for support through a Principal-established process

Discrete Actions

- Publish Strategic Plan and distribute electronically to Rilke community
- Set ~~2016-17~~ calendar of events
- Dedicate a space in the building to celebrate Rilke Schule awards and business partnerships

Development

Enduring Actions

- Solicit school business partnership with Forbes German Top 40
- Seek continued support from the Federal Republic of Germany (i.e. Pasch Grant)
- Secure Art and Science-focused Anchorage business partners

Discrete Actions

- Develop formal recognition procedure for donors and business partners.
- Make initial contact with business partnerships and maintain a positive working relationship including a celebration procedure to acknowledge business partnerships

Effective Communication

(Principal and Communication Team)

Articulating the Rilke message ties the nine competencies with the strategic targets and higher-level authorizing documents. Communication with the blended Directors/Principal team largely occurs as follows. Among the Directors, the Secretary acts as a Recording Secretary, acknowledging routine correspondence, keeping minutes, and providing board support. The Vice Chair serves as a Corresponding Secretary and leads the Communication Team, a group of Rilke parents with professional public affairs and communication expertise including web design. The Principal rounds out this team to bridge strategic objectives and governance to the school-level tools and systems like School Messenger. This team is meant to be highly flexible and forward-looking to keep all Rilke stakeholders informed. Daily communication with the school and parents is fully a Principal function. The Directors may from time to time, at least quarterly, provide a Board of Directors communication to the Rilke community.

Enduring Actions

- Accomplish weekly communication to parents via staff or Principal
- Provide weekly social media updates to the Rilke community
- Author a quarterly newsletter from the Principal
- Provide quarterly feedback with School Business Partners
- Maintain hardcopy records of pertinent Directors' documents at the school office
- Establish standardized posting location for school events and public notices

Discrete Actions

- Update the Rilke marketing brochure
- Create Rilke Schule press package for school tours and visitors
- Author a Rilke Schule Communication Policy
- Establish a Rilke Schule Communication Plan/Strategy
- Use resources of ASD Communications Department
- Create multimedia communication
- Utilize ASD communication staff to increase effective communication
- Communicate effectively with parents about learning expectations, student progress and reinforcing learning at home.
- Implement effective strategies to increase parent engagement
- Instructional leader(s) will build productive, respectful relationships with parents and community members regarding school programs and school improvement efforts

Infrastructure

(Support-Infrastructure)

Nearly 25% of Rilke's budget goes to facility costs. The Directors worked diligently with the Rilke Schule Inc. and the Building Task Force to construct a build-to-suit leased facility of 39,500 s/f in 2015. This facility is under a twenty-year lease with an option to buy at year ten. It is the decision of the Directors not to attempt to purchase this facility at year twenty for several reasons.

- The needs of the school may be significantly different in twenty years due to technology and other factors.
- The space needs of the current facility are already at capacity.
- Buying a twenty-year old building would mean many components would be that old and at an age for likely replacement, which would drive up facility costs.
- Rilke Schule is not in the business of owning property; it is in the business of educating children.
- Repairs and maintenance would become the burden of the school without qualified building management capacity or increased budget.
- Lease payments currently are lower per month than likely mortgage payments.
- While the APC currently signed the lease, it cannot own property. Some other entity would have to own a building if Rilke Schule buys its current facility.

For these reasons, the Directors have opted to lease to meet the school's facilities needs with the long-term hope that at some future date, Anchorage School District makes adequate and acceptable location space available to Rilke Schule.. The Infrastructure competency is two-fold. First, is to operate the current facility as best as possible to maintain a professional image and reduce bill back charges for maintenance and repair. Second, this competency calls on Rilke Schule to maximize its time on 64th Avenue until 2035, or longer, for the best possible learning environment.

Enduring Actions

- Conduct quarterly volunteer nights for cleaning and maintenance during the school year

Discrete Actions

- Execute the Rilke Outdoor Master Plan, which includes among other things:
- Install and/or construct May Pole, raised gardening beds, southern property line fence, complete alternate playing field, amphitheater, nature loop, ski/coat racks
- Establish a facility rental policy
- Designate Rilke Schule, Inc. as the official naming entity for Rilke Schule
- Create 2035 facility plan
- Develop preventative maintenance plan

Resource Management

(Strategic Planning – Budget/Finance)

Keen financial management is absolutely essential for Rilke Schule. The Rilke Schule Base Student Allocation pays for all rent, facilities, operations and services, unlike the majority of Anchorage School District Schools. Therefore, keen financial management is absolutely essential for Rilke Schule. Charter school business management is such a driving concern that the Directors have placed it on an equal weighting as academic and administrative outcomes for the Principal. Just as Operational Excellence is the a priori competency for the Principal, Resource Management is the paramount competency for the Directors. Management of public and donated money is a sacred trust and responsibility.

Enduring Actions

- Fully execute all financial management policies on a recurring and timely basis
- Fund only program requirements
- Conduct annual financial audits for all Rilke organizations and make the findings public
- Train front office staff to create baseline financial reports
- Include financial expenditures in Principal's report to the Directors

Discrete Actions

- Utilize inventories to monitor/plan for purchases of curricula that align with content standards
- Unify club account purchasing procedures
- Conduct annual teacher needs assessment and prioritize needs
- Fully comply with Rilke Policy 008-Budgeting
- Utilize student projections to assist in budget management
- Develop a functioning technology plan

Self-Reflection

(Performance – Evaluations and Analysis)

A strong understanding of past performance can provide insights on future conditions. The competency of Self-Reflection is critical to Rilke's Priorities of Freedom and Culture. The innovation and self-determination that comes with a Charter necessitates maturity and learning to maximize this freedom. To advance all five priorities and accomplish the goals, analysis and understanding of strengths and weaknesses are paramount. Some of this feedback is external from the Anchorage School District and State of Alaska. However, the most beneficial feedback comes from the German Immersion community which is difficult to fully realize being the only school of our kind in Alaska. This competency calls Rilke to a culture of continual improvement and constantly striving to be the best form of itself it can be.

Enduring Actions

- Author annual State of the School Reports for parents/guardians
- Complete end-of-year reporting with Anchorage School District
- Maintain currency on all state and local reporting requirements
- Measure German language testing year to year
- Be a top rated Alaskan school (with whatever scoring is established)
- Accomplish exit surveys with departing parents and students to glean lessons learned
- Conduct departure surveys with staff leaving Rilke Schule
- Solicit feedback from Rilke Schule Board of Visitors for improvements

Discrete Actions

- Analyze ASD climate and connectedness survey data to develop processes and procedures to improve school setting.
- Analyze 3-year trend data from test scores to focus resources.

