

# Stillwater Sunrise Rotary STRIVE 2025-2026 Curriculum

## 1. Program Objectives

Using a mentoring model, STRIVE works with junior and senior students in the Stillwater Area High School AVID program, to promote:

- An optimistic, confident mind-set
- Personal values rooted in integrity and fairness
- Personal skills needed for independent living
- Appropriate, ambitious post-secondary educational goals
- Sources of information to support career and personal progress

## 2. Calendar

STRIVE meets during the school year, typically meeting twice each month. Sessions are cancelled when they conflict with a school holiday, rather than being rescheduled to a different day or week.

## 3. Session Outline

A typical strive session consists of a focusing activity, a group activity or presentation, and a small group discussion. This outline will be shared with presenters that are asked to handle a session.

### 3.1. Focusing Activity

Sessions start with an activity which is typically 5-10 minutes in length. The best focusing activities include both physical activity and a team cooperation aspect. Surveys show that the physical activity is highly valued by the students. While it's desirable that the activity somehow explicitly supports the topic for the session, it's not strictly necessary. The physical activity, and drawing the group together, is the key.

### 3.2. Group Activity or Presentation

This engages the large group to illustrate the topic for the session. When it's handled as a presentation going after the topic directly, including the students interactively in the presentation is highly desirable. Covering the topic with a group activity that demonstrates the topic is even better. The time of a presentation or large group activity must be well controlled to ensure that small group discussion time is allowed, so these can sometimes be quite brief.

### 3.3. Small Group Discussion

Small group discussion is given high priority during STRIVE sessions, giving mentors an opportunity to discuss the topic with their group. The discussion questions are important, as not all mentors are comfortable with facilitating open discussion without them. Presenters are asked to provide several (6?) discussion questions 8 days before the session.

## 4. One Curriculum, Two Plans

Students are generally in STRIVE for two years, one as a junior, and one as a senior. The same list of topics (the curriculum) will be used each year, so the typical student will see each topic twice. But two plans will be used to present the topics, alternating each year. For example, a topic that is presented by a speaker one year might be covered by an interactive activity the next year. Students will get the benefits of topic repetition, without being bored by doing the same thing twice.

## 5. Core Topics

Our curriculum gathers a number of focus area into three 3 core topics:

Character	Community	Planning and Life Skills
Honesty, integrity and	Networking, building genuine	Personal finance, goal

fairness	relationships, accessing community resources, engaging in your community	setting, careers, problem solving
Positive Culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-messaging</li> <li>• Attitude and Hope</li> <li>• Creating positive culture</li> </ul>	Kindness	Vision
Kindness	Serving	Planning
Serving	Leadership and Fellowship	Intentionality
Character	Team	The college experience, finding jobs, finding housing, age of majority implications
Ethics	Networking	Hope
Grit		Networking
Values		
Attentiveness		

The school's AVID program similarly has 3 core areas:

- **Rigorous Academic Preparedness** - Students develop academic skills and can successfully complete rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum and experiences.
- **Opportunity Knowledge** - Students research opportunities, set goals, make choices that support their long-term aspirations, and successfully navigate transitions to the next level.
- **Student Agency** - Students believe in themselves and act intentionally to build relationships, persist through obstacles, and activate their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills to reach their potential.

While STRIVE does not directly target academic preparedness (which is already well-targeted by AVID classes), the other two AVID areas map well into the STRIVE core topics. Opportunity Knowledge is very tightly supported by STRIVE's "Planning and Life Skills" topic. For Student Agency, all three STRIVE topic areas directly apply to equipping and encouraging students to believe in themselves, act boldly to pursue opportunity, and build strong relationships.

### 5.1. Character

Informed by the 4-way test, a person can cultivate and refine their character to reflect traits of honesty, integrity and fairness. We want the students to observe that people can exhibit highly ethical behavior even under intense pressure or desire. Living one's life from principles of honesty, integrity and fairness brings much satisfaction, even if occasionally an unscrupulous person seems to get some temporary advantage.

- Service activity can provide unexpected satisfaction and benefits to the provider
- Significant accomplishment requires perseverance and overcoming obstacles: grit

Positive culture is a key aspect of character, and for this topic, we want the students to understand that, to a surprising degree, their state of mind is chosen by them, and is not automatically determined by what happens to them: "I can't control what people say to me, but I can decide how it makes me feel and choose how I want to react." We want students to understand that while they may not have direct control over results (getting the hired), they have control over their character (habitually on time), and that the two are related.

- Creating positive self-fulfilling prophecies: "I've prepared appropriately, so I expect, and deserve, to do well on this test."
- The company you keep matters, and can help you create your own positive culture

## 5.2. Community

It's important to be connected, to others, and to our community. People are created to work better together. When we know our community, it can help us and we can help our community.

- Creating a personal network of genuine connections
- Volunteering is a good way to get involved in a community
- Within our community, there are a number of resources for help with jobs, housing and personal problems.
- We have opportunities to engage and grow as leaders in our community
- Community engagement grows our personal network

## 5.3. Planning and Life Skills

Bad things happen all by themselves – to get good things to happen takes a plan. Everyone knows that goals are good in some general sense, but the almost-magic benefit of setting goals is widely under-appreciated.

- Good goals are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based
- Make a career plan, work the plan, and be ready to change it if needed or wanted
- Finance: realistic plans, realistic expectations
- Credit: a useful tool to use carefully
- Living intentionally, as a life choice, and priorities (rocks)
- Problem solving with an open mind

The Pathways program at the school takes a good approach to post-secondary education that we can follow in Strive – essentially that “it depends on the student”. Some students are well-served with a trade school path. Others, an entrepreneurial path. Many will do well on a traditional four-year college program. We want to encourage the students to be ambitious, to assume they can overcome almost any roadblock, and to learn carefully about themselves to discover what they need.

We want our students to look to their futures with confidence. With this topic, we can bring some visibility of our students' futures into our STRIVE sessions, and equip them with some basic knowledge and life skills that may not be top-priority in a primarily academic setting:

- Panel discussion with prior graduates (college, technical and trade path)
- The legal implications of turning 18
- How does one find a “real” job?
- How does one find a place to live?

## 6. **2024-2025 Feedback/Ideas**

- During the networking session, let's consider an activity to get students contact info for a mentor in their career interest area, or another Rotarian or community person, if no mentor with the area is available
- During the contributing to civic community session, include some material in negotiating (or is this a career skill?)
- A new topic of "The basics of adulting might be good". ie. insurance, meal planning, laundry, illness, prescriptions, taxes, voting

Crutches for Africa was great this year. Maybe we can come up with another. Perhaps the STRIVE students could lead and recruit 9th and 10th graders.

## 7. 2025-2026 Schedule

STRIVE meets on Fridays, during the first two periods:

- **First Period:** 8:35-9:27
- **Second Period:** 9:34-10:26

To provide new insights on the topics that will be repeated for seniors, we'll tend not to use the same presenters for the same topics in the immediately following years, or at least ask presenters to vary their presentations.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Core Topic Area</u>	<u>Session Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Focusing Activity</u>	<u>Comments</u>
9/12 OK	Character	<p><b>Four Way Test:</b> Is it the truth? (And that's the easy one!)</p> <p>This will be a (brief) discussion of the nature of truth. We'll introduce the four way test as a statement of values and a decision-making tool.</p>	Stephani Atkins	Yarn Ball Introductions (24-25: Hoop Hackysack)	(24-25: Brent Voight) 7/14: Brent not available
9/26 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<p><b>Living With Intention:</b> Dealing with the big rocks first</p> <p>If you prioritize, and do the important things first, you can fit more in, live a fuller life, and feel in better control. This talk is backed up by an engaging visual aid – a large jar, rocks, gravel and sand.</p>	Brent Voight	Group Priority List	(24-25: Christian Milker)

10/10 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<b>Career Planning:</b> Career plans are good, and plans will change	Mark Fisher	NASA Moon Crash Prioritization	Design the session to also introduce mentors to the students (24-25: Mark Fisher)
		<b>Details:</b> There are two key messages for this session: 1) Being intentional about your career goals works dramatically better than simply taking advantage of what comes along, and 2) You can expect to make a significant career change during your working life. A career model as a jungle gym rather than a ladder is used.			
10/24 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<b>Career Exploration:</b> Students will have a chance to quiz special visitors and mentors about their careers	Greg Otsuka (25-25: Brent Voight) Key resources are visitors from other clubs and some mentors	None	
		<b>Details:</b> The focus will be on sharing: education required, skills needed to build once you have the job, how one finds meaning in the job, and <u>how the student can learn more if they are interested</u> . This is conducted in a “speed dating” format so the students can meet quite a few people.			
11/7 OK	Character	<b>Your Network:</b> I like making friends, I just don't like networking...	Ken McGinley	TBD	(24-25: Ken McGinley)
		<b>Details:</b> “Networking” has gotten a bad rap, but it's natural and everyone does it. It can be done in a natural and genuine way that expands our circle of friends and helps us with opportunities. Use LinkedIn. Invest in your network. Don't be ashamed to reach out.			
11/21 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<b>Money:</b> Plan to keep it  Important financial basics, including budgeting, how to apply for a loan, credit cards, how to build & maintain credit, and very basic insurance issues.	Paula Williams	TBD	(24-25: Paula Williams) New curriculum from Royal Credit Union for 25-26

12/12 OK	Character	<p><b>Character of Leaders:</b> You are leadership material!</p> <p>Four characteristics of leaders will be highlighted: vision, courage, judgement and authenticity.</p>	Lonny Stormo	TBD	(24-25: Lonny Stormo)
		<p><b>Details:</b> Using examples from the community or popular culture, students will work interactively to identify these characteristics in the leaders they already know, then in each other. Opportunities for leadership development in local government and volunteer service will also be shared so students realize they can make a difference in our community.</p>			
1/16 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<p><b>Panel of Graduates:</b> We're from the future, and we're here to help</p> <p>STRIVE graduates will come and share their experiences with college, trade school, jobs and housing.</p>	Ted Nesse + graduates	TBD (24-25: Students got a random fact about a panelist, and had to go in person to find which panelist the fact applied to..	Seed with adulting questions (medical insurance, transportation, housing), seek older graduates (24-25: Ted Nesse) 7/17: Ken has contact information (phone numbers)
		<p>Details: Questions from our students drive the discussion. Seed questions will get the Q&amp;A started.</p>			
1/30 OK	Community/ Character	<p><b>Contributing to Civic Community:</b> Your place in your world: your choice. Negotiation is natural.</p>	Judge Juanita Freeman (24-25: Christian Milker)	TBD	
		<p><b>Details:</b> The message for this session is that we each can make a difference in our community. Volunteering is a way to help out, meet people, and learn about the place you live. Engaging with local government provides an opportunity to meet interesting people, and to develop leadership skills. Compromise and negotiation are important skills for civic life, and will be covered.</p>			

2/13 OK	Planning and Life Skills	<b>Interviewing and Resume Skills:</b> For jobs, scholarships and more – your chance to shine!	Kelly Schuna (24-25: n/a)	Handshake Game	New 25-26 10/6: Diane Peterson will provide a resume handout for Kelly to present
		<b>Details:</b> The students will get some help with their interviewing and resume skills during this session. They'll be able to use them for the scholarship interviews, and we want them to be useful for job hunting and more.			Kelly: Interviewing; Diane: Resume
2/27 OK	Community	<b>Scholarship Program:</b> Details of scholarship opportunities will be shared  <b>Community Resources:</b> Sometimes you need a friend	Ken McGinley: Scholarship, Ted Nesse, Officer Dave: Community Service, plus Community Service Staff	Agency Search 8 Mentors will be set up as a type of agency with answers Each student will be given a random statistical question that can be answered by the right type of agency. Students are tasked with finding the right agency to answer their question, and return to their seats.	(24-25: Scholarship: Ken McGinley Community: Ted Nesse/Officer Dave)  (24-25 Activity) Students got ½ a symbol representing a challenge, and had to go find the matching half (with a mentor) that represented a service to help with the challenge.
		<b>Details:</b> (Community Resources) Sometimes people need help not available from friends and family, and don't realize that there are community resources available. This session will introduce students to services in the area that can help with jobs, food, housing, counseling, addiction and more.			
3/27 OK	Community/ Character	<b>Life Lessons: So, how about those '90s?</b> Most of this session will be given over for Q&A between students and mentors. <b>Class Service Project Introduction:</b> The class service project will be introduced in this session.	Mentors (discussion)  Bill Leonard (service project)	Ball Toss Students toss a ball across a circle, and (optionally) answer the question that faces them as they catch it.	(24-25: Lonny and Janet Stormo
		<b>Details:</b> The students and mentors will be given time for unstructured Q&A. We'll suggest that hard questions are fair game, as long as everyone understands that hard			

		answers are entirely optional. Nobody needs to answer a question that makes them uncomfortable, they can just smile and say “pass”. Examples: What has most surprised you about growing older? What do you wish you had known when you were 25? What can you say about finding a life partner?			
4/10 OK	Character	<b>Positive Attitude:</b> So, how do I feel about that?	Brent Voight	TBD	Scholarship announcements (Ken, 10 min.) at this meeting. Greg Miller will also share a life observation at this meeting. 24-25: Brent Voight
		<b>Details:</b> To a surprising degree, we can choose our state of mind, and it is not automatically determined by what has happens to us: “I can’t control what people say to me, but I can decide how it makes me feel and choose how I want to react.”			
4/24 OK	Character	<b>Handling Setback:</b> Got Grit?  Repeated failure often precedes success, so it’s essential to dust off and get right back at the challenge.	Nance Purcell	TBD	(24-25: Kindra Molin)
		<b>Details:</b> Regardless of how failure makes us feel, our response needs to be “try again”.			
5/8 OK	Character	<b>Integrity:</b> Making good decisions in bad situations  Continues the Character/Four Way Test session.	Christian Milker	TBD	24-25: Bethany Cox Allow time for mentors and students to exchange contact information.
		<b>Details:</b> This addresses the question: “Why should one ever act against self-interest, just to “do the right thing”? May cover the founding of Rotary.			

Revisions:  
3/2/26: details for 3/27 session