

Stillwater Sunrise Rotary STRIVE 2024-2025 Curriculum

Version [11/12/24](#) (see sunrotary.org/strive.php for latest version)

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 10-15 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 is the "main event" for the session. If it is a group activity, it will illustrate the topic for the session. When it's a presentation going after the topic directly, including the students interactively in the presentation is highly desirable. The time of a presentation must be well controlled to ensure that group discussion time is allowed.

3.3. Small Group Discussion

Toward the end of most sessions, groups are given an opportunity to discuss the topic and what they observed during the activity or presentation. A set of discussion questions can be helpful, as not all mentors are comfortable with facilitating open discussion without them.

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

In a curriculum summary from November 2023, Brent highlighted these focus areas for the STRIVE program:

- Team
- Kindness (twice)
- Serving (four times)
- Character (twice)
- Ethics/Seeking to Understand
- Vision
- Networking (twice)
- Planning (twice)
- Grit
- Values
- Building a Positive Culture
- Leadership and Fellowship
- Intentionality
- Self Messaging

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- Hope
- Attitude
- Attentiveness

These can be distilled into 3 core topics for the STRIVE program:

| Character | Community | Planning and Life Skills |
|--|---|---|
| Honesty, integrity and fairness | Networking, building genuine relationships, accessing community resources, engaging in your community | Personal finance, goal setting, careers, problem solving |
| Positive Culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-messaging • Attitude and Hope • Creating positive culture | 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

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- 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

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?

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6. 2024-2025 Schedule

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Core Topic Area</u> | <u>Session Topic</u> | <u>Presenter</u> | <u>Comments</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| September 27 | Character | Four Way Test: Is it the truth? (That's the easy one!) | Brent Voight | |
| October 11 | Planning and Life Skills | Living With Intention: Dealing with the big rocks first | Christian Milker | |
| October 25 | Community | Handling Setback: Got Grit? | Kindra Molin | |
| November 8 | Planning and Life Skills | Money: Plan to keep it | Paula Williams | |
| November 22 | Character | Positive Attitude: So, how do I feel about that? | Brent Voight | |
| December 13 | Character | Character of Leaders: You are leadership material! Also during this session, students will be asked to generate questions for next session's panelists, either offline (in class) or with slips to return immediately. | Lonny Stormo | |
| January 10 | Planning and Life Skills | Panel of Graduates: We're from the future, and we're here to help | Ted Nesse (+ graduates) | |
| January 24 | Community | Contributing to Civic Community: Your place in your world: your choice | TBD Brent will ask Bob Manning and/or a Pathways person | Ing can help with presenter, Community Thread (Sally Anderson) is another option |
| February 14 | Character | Integrity: Making good decisions in bad situations | TBD (Ask Bethany Cox) | This session is based on the Four Way Test, and perhaps the story of Rotary's founder and founding. |
| February 28 | Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship Program • Community Resources: Sometimes you need a friend | Scholarship: ask Ken McGinley Community: TBD, Officer Dave? Jenna? | Ing or Kindra can help with asking Officer Dave or Jenna (Ted to contact Kindra) |
| March 14 | Character | Your Network: I like making friends, I just don't like | Ask Brent Voight | |

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| | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| | | networking... | | |
| April 11 | Planning and Life Skills | Career Planning: Career plans are good, and plans will change | TBD | Could this be the speed interviewing session? Rick H. as speaker? |
| April 25 | Planning and Life Skills | Some Basics: Finding a job, a way to get around, a place to live, and staying out of trouble after 18 | TBD + Officer Dave | |
| May 9 | Character | Four Way Test: Will it be beneficial to all concerned? | TBD | |

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7. Session Plans

Here are the detailed plans for the current year. For next year, the topics and emphasis areas will be the same or similar, but the presenter and activities will be different.

7.1. September Session 1

- Presenter: Brent Voight
- Core Topic Area: Character
- Session Topic: Four Way Test: Is it the truth? (That's the easy one!)
- Details: This will be a brief discussion of the nature of truth.
- Focusing Activity: Team building activity: Hoop Hackysack – this will be a larger part of the session than usual (first session)
- Discussion Questions: Discussion will be relatively short for this session, but two discussion questions are planned to allow a group discussion of truth.

7.2. October Session 1

- Presenter: Christian Milker
- Core Topic Area: Planning and Life Skills
- Session Topic: Living With Intention: Dealing with the big rocks first
- Details: The takeaway is that if you just dump stuff in your life as it comes, things spill over and you don't get everything important covered. But if you prioritize, and do the important things first, you can fit more in, live a fuller life, and feel in better control. This is presented as a talk, backed up by an engaging visual aid – a large jar, rocks, gravel and sand.
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by the presenter)

7.3. October Session 2

- Presenter: Kindra Molin
- Core Topic Area: Character
- Session Topic: Handling Setback: Got Grit?
- Details: The focus for the session will be on how repeated failure often precedes success, so it's essential to dust off and get right back at the challenge. Regardless of how failure makes us feel, our response needs to be "try again".
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)
- ~~Core Topic Area: Community~~
- ~~Session Topic: Your Network: I like making friends, I just don't like networking~~
- ~~Details: "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.~~
- ~~Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)~~
- ~~Focusing Activity: TBD~~
- ~~Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)~~

7.4. November Session 1

- Presenter: Paula Williams
- Core Topic Area: Planning and Life Skills
- Session Topic: Money: Plan to keep it
- Details: Important financial basics, including budgeting, how to apply for

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a loan, credit cards, how to build & maintain credit, and very basic insurance issues.

- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.5. November 2 Session 2

- Presenter: [Brent Voight](#)
- Topic: Character
- Emphasis Area: Positive Attitude: So, how do I feel about that?
- Details: 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."
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.6. December Session 1

- Presenter: Lonny Stormo
- Core Topic Area: Character
- Session Topic: Character of Leaders: You are leadership material
- Details: Four characteristics of leaders will be highlighted: vision, courage, judgement and authenticity. 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.
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.7. January Session 1

- Presenter: [Ted Nesse](#)
- Core Topic Area: Planning and Life Skills
- Session Topic: Panel of Graduates: We're from the future, and we're here to help
- Details: We will invite STRIVE graduates to come and share their experiences with college, trade school, jobs and housing. Questions from our students will be the key driver of the discussion. The presenter will have a number of seed questions available to get the Q&A started.
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (none)

7.8. January Session 2

- Presenter: TBD
- Core Topic Area: Community
- Session Topic: Contributing to Civic Community: Your place in your world: your choice
- Details: 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.
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.9. February Session 1

- Presenter: TBD

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- Core Topic Area: Character
- Session Topic: Integrity: Making good decisions in bad situations
- Details: This session will continue the topic started by the Character/Four Way Test session. The key question to address is “Why should one ever act against self-interest, just to “do the right thing”?”
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.10. February Session 2

- Presenter: TBD
- Core Topic Area: Community
- Session Topic 1: Scholarship Program
- Session Topic 2: Community Resources: Sometimes you need a friend
- Details 1: The details of the various scholarship opportunities will be shared with the group.
- Details 2: Sometimes people need help that is not available from friends and family, and they may not realize that there are community resources available to them. This session will introduce students to some services in the St. Croix Valley that can provide help with things like jobs, food, housing, counseling, addiction and more.
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.11. March Session 1

- Presenter: TBD
- ~~Core Topic Area: Community~~
- ~~Session Topic: Your Network: I like making friends, I just don't like networking~~
- ~~Details: “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.~~
- ~~Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)~~
- ~~Focusing Activity: TBD~~
- ~~Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)~~
- ~~Core Topic Area: Character~~
- ~~Session Topic: Handling Setback: Got Crit?~~
- ~~Details: The focus for the session will be on how repeated failure often precedes success, so it's essential to dust off and get right back at the challenge. Regardless of how failure makes us feel, our response needs to be “try again”.~~
- ~~Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)~~
- ~~Focusing Activity: TBD~~
- ~~Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)~~

7.12. April Session`

- Presenter: TBD
- Core Topic Area: Planning and Life Skills
- Session Topic: Career Planning: Career plans are good, and plans will change.
- Details: 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.

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- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.13. April Session 2

- Presenter: TBD
- Core Topic Area: Planning and Life Skills
- Session Topic: Some Basics: Finding a job, a way to get around, a place to live, and staying out of trouble after 18.
- Details: How does one find a “real” job? What do you do when you can’t stay with your parents anymore? What do you do about transportation? After giving some tips on these major life basics, there will be a few minutes spent to highlight the significance of turning 18, with respect to running afoul of the law.
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

7.14. May Session 1

- Presenter: TBD
- Core Topic Area: Character
- Session Topic: Four Way Test: Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- Details: This will come back to the ethics and integrity topic that was covered twice before during the year. The importance of self-validation, and satisfaction with having done the right thing will be contrasted with the fickle nature of the validation offered by those around us.
- Group Activity/Presentation: (supplied by presenter)
- Focusing Activity: TBD
- Discussion Questions: (supplied by presenter)

8. **Student Input**

Here are some curriculum suggestions from the 2023-2024 students:

- (Common suggestion) Strive could be better with more interactive activities because sometimes just listening to conversations can get long and I lose focus.
- (Common suggestion) We shouldn’t be sitting the entire hour
- More moving around activities like scavenger hunts and photo taking assignments
- More career topics
- More time with mentors to learn more