Sample Strategic Plan

This is a guide to the goals and implementation of the Strategic Plan, adopted by the board of trustees in the spring of 19xx. Extensive committee and task force efforts, representing a variety of the school’s constituencies as well as the wider community, went into creating this plan. Questions and reactions should be directed to the Head of School.

NOTE: Those goals and strategies that address major recommendations made by the ISACS accreditation visit team are indicated with an asterisk* and represent an updating of the strategic plan as approved by the board of trustees.

Program

1. The SCHOOL program will ensure relevance, quality and balance among the aesthetic, intellectual and physical elements of education.*
   - Define "relevance" and "quality," as they pertain to the SCHOOL program and educating children in light of the school’s mission.
   - Review the structure by which curriculum is currently analyzed and updated to insure a coordinated course of study from grade to grade and division to division.*
   - Study the concept of year-round schooling to determine if it makes good educational and economic sense for THE SCHOOL.

2. Basic skills will be redefined considering the requirements of the 21st century.
   - Investigate additional teaching strategies that focus on critical thinking and group effort.
   - Determine if systems thinking is a means of helping students more effectively analyze and synthesize information and, if so, when and how should it be integrated into the school’s curriculum.

3. Students, faculty, and staff will use technology capably and comfortably to enhance their learning, teaching and communication skills.*
   - Hire a technical computer "on-call" trouble-shooter who will address hardware problems as they arise in the school.
   - Replace administrative computer system, install new computers, and purchase new software for student records, admissions, development, accounting, office functions, maintenance and networking.
   - Renew Computer Sinking Fund annually to allow flexibility in purchasing hardware and software until such time that a capital drive eliminates the need for such a fund.

4. The importance of the arts will be emphasized in educating the whole child.*
   - Find ways that the arts can be further integrated into core subjects.
   - Determine the feasibility of increased art electives and requirements.
   - Utilize outside sources to augment THE SCHOOL’S arts.

5. Athletics and physical education will be integrated into the education of the whole child.*
• Review our athletic offerings to: ensure full use of facility; offer variety to maximize student participation; and develop non-competitive alternatives.*
• Evaluate the need for a viable Lower School intramural program.
• Explore off-season (summer) athletic offerings.

Community  
1. THE SCHOOL will be a community in which all segments can contribute to the endeavor of learning, and each can benefit from the full and energetic participation of all the others.

• Review school publications in picture and word to determine if THE SCHOOL values, including the value of diversity, are effectively conveyed.
• Review all-school projects and assemblies to determine if sufficient in number and design to enhance sense of community at THE SCHOOL.
• Develop a list of school traditions, describe each, rank in order of importance and then determine if some should be abandoned and others created that will enhance the sense of community.

Students  
1. THE SCHOOL will attract and retain a diverse study body which reflects the range of social, economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds found in our geographic area.* Students must demonstrate the potential to learn, succeed, and grow within a rigorous and intellectually demanding college preparatory curriculum.

• Develop and implement creative ways to attract and retain a diverse student body: Expansion of Friends of THE SCHOOL program; organize focus groups on marketing for diversity; organize meetings of parent affinity groups; Project R.E.A.D. (integrating parents of color into volunteer roles at THE SCHOOL).
• Review the report and substantiating surveys, plus review current practices in serving children with special needs.
• Write policy regarding admission of special needs children.

Faculty/staff and administration  
1. THE SCHOOL will recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified and caring faculty/staff who will support the mission of the school through the development of strong relationships with students and one another, opportunities for professional growth and development, and commitment to high standards.

• Compare allocation for professional development at THE SCHOOL with other independent schools to determine if appropriate amount is being expended and set priorities for professional development.
• Develop a strategy as to how personnel of color are recruited to THE SCHOOL.
• Explore instituting a mentoring/peer support program.
• Institute a long-range plan for in-service days at THE SCHOOL, insuring that multiculturalism and gender issues are revisited at least once every five years.

Families  
1 THE SCHOOL will engage parents as partners in education and in the community life of the school.

• Develop a parents booster club for sporting events.
• Institute a buddy program that pairs new families with current ones.
• Explore the possibility of adult evening classes.
• Explore new ways of communicating with parents such as e-mail, fax, video.

Alumni
1. THE SCHOOL will engage alumni as active members and leaders of the school community*

• Survey alumni on communications and involvement with the school.
• Create an outstanding alumni award, an alumni career day, and an alumni professional network by starting affinity groupings of alumni, i.e., Chicago-area lawyers, New York City artists, etc.
• Hire a part-time alumni coordinator.

Plant
1. THE SCHOOL will maintain the existing facilities in a condition which supports the program

• Determine corrective action to deficiencies, assign costs and prioritize.
• Identify and assign replacement costs to all furnishings; develop and implement a furnishings plan.

2. THE SCHOOL will develop a plan to identify and prioritize changes to the physical plant that will be necessary to accommodate the current and future programs of the school.

• Engage a consultant who will develop a master site plan that will incorporate the needs of the school for at least the next 10 years. Changes will support and enhance future programs, such as the following: preschool refurbishment; upgraded science facilities for Lower/Middle School; co-ed weight room; storage; heating/ventilating/air conditioning; playgrounds; computer facility/infrastructure; video conferencing; expanded parking facilities, and multipurpose rooms.

Finance
1. THE SCHOOL will continue to maintain a balanced budget that reflects, supports and stimulates the program.

• Utilize zero-based budget approach.
• Hold meetings for parents, faculty/staff, and board to educate re: budget as they relate to tuition and fund-raising.

2. THE SCHOOL will provide an equitable, competitive compensation package to attract and retain a highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff.*

• Study salary systems in general, from unstructured (current system) to moderate (career ladder) to highly structured (published scale), considering whether or not merit and extracurricular pay should be included in a final system.
• Develop a projection, making assumptions regarding inflation, tuition increases, increases in annual fund giving and increases in endowment, which will show at the end of a five-year period, a level of faculty compensation that will equal, if not exceed, the mid-range for faculty salaries in ISACS.
• Integrate a five-year, compensation package into capital campaign.
3. Alternative sources of revenue to support program needs will be studied.

- Study use of facilities for rental opportunities.
- Consider desirability and impact of state and federal funding.
- Investigate feasibility of separate fees for added services (e.g., sports, music, etc.).
- Increase parent and alumni participation to 10% above the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) average.
- Investigate ways to invest grandparents in their grandchildren’s education at THE SCHOOL.
- Identify the elements of a capital campaign, based on the needs described in this Strategic Plan. Key elements include faculty compensation, technology, plant and endowment.
- Continue to research and write grants.

4. THE SCHOOL will increase the endowment to support the program of the school with special emphasis on faculty compensation, technology, professional growth and development, financial aid, diversity and additions to plant.

- As the Board undergoes capital campaigns, it will increase endowment at 50% of the total dollar amount raised.
- The board will continue to solicit endowed chairs and increase bequests through the planned giving program.

Marketing/public relations
1. The marketing program will communicate the positive learning environment at THE SCHOOL, the value of an independent school education and the sense of camaraderie within the SCHOOL community.

- Reinstate the five and 10-year enrollment assessment of gains and losses for each grade to better determine future enrollment projections.
- Set clear guidelines if and how financial aid can be used for marketing purposes.
- Develop an internal/external marketing plan for the next three years.*
- Write an orientation program for new students in each academic division which will include such activities as: regular interviews with the students; peer mentoring; comparison of actual with predicted performance; and time management/study skills overview.

Board
1 Members of the Board will be informed, committed and dedicated to THE SCHOOL mission.

- Develop a year-round, effective process to recruit the best people in the community and within THE SCHOOL’s diverse constituent group to serve as trustees. Potential board leadership should be a high priority.
- Develop an effective mentoring process for new board members.

2. The structure of the Board will be such that its members can carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively.*

- Examine board size
• Consider the establishment of an Advisory Board, which would increase the school’s access to leadership resources from the community.
• Develop a board policy manual.

3. The Board will ensure that the strategic planning process is an on-going endeavor at THE SCHOOL.

• The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.
• In the year following the re-accreditation evaluation by ISACS (which occurs every seven years), undertake a constituency-based strategic planning process with the help of a consultant.

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Author: Maumee Valley Country Day School, 1996 (modified by ISACS for illustrative purposes, 4/99.)