



**2016
STRATEGIC
PLAN**

ISACS
inspiring independent schools

independent schools association of the central states



Address

ISACS
55 W Wacker Dr #701
Chicago, IL 60601
United States

Phone & Fax

Phone: 312.750.1190
Fax: 312.750.1193

Online

Claudia Daggett: claudia@isacs.org
Robin Breslin: robin@isacs.org
Andy Gilla: andy@isacs.org
Jacob Isaac: jacob@isacs.org
Kevin Rooney: kevin@isacs.org
Jill Webb: jill@isacs.org
Karen Zeitlin: karen@isacs.org

Website: isacs.org



Dear Colleagues,

Inspiring independent schools, that's you. Our members, a broad spectrum of mission-oriented independent schools, inspire us to deliver the most relevant and finely-tuned services possible. We're eager to support your continual school improvement and the nurturance of your adult learning community. In the process, we aim to inspire you to serve your students more effectively, try new approaches, and share your failures and successes.

The strategic vision described here offers you our roadmap for that work. You will see that we have identified five key areas of focus: professional development, accreditation, equity and justice, the internal structures and process of ISACS leadership and governance, and our brand – the way we talk about and illustrate the value of membership. I am grateful for the dedicated thought, attention, and discourse of the ISACS Board in shaping this plan.

I invite you to read on to get a flavor for how we intend to lead ISACS schools to *pursue exemplary independent education* and, ultimately, serve as a catalyst for *empowering all students to contribute and thrive in a diverse and changing world*.

Looking forward,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Claudia M. Daggett' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Claudia M. Daggett
President

the process



To provide a long-range view of future association priorities, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States launched, during the 2015-2016 school year, a comprehensive process to develop a strategic plan.

In order to build a sound base of information and to guide the planning process, ISACS enlisted the assistance of Symmonds & Associates, a research and planning firm. Ian Symmonds worked directly with an ISACS strategic planning steering committee to focus the attention of the board and a series of specifically-focused trustee work groups on research, member survey results, environment scans, SWOT analysis, and trends in the independent school and broader education sectors.

This process culminated in April 2016 with the development by the board of a set of goals, strategies, and action steps for the next three to five years.



mission, vision & values

Mission | What We Do

ISACS leads schools to pursue exemplary independent education.

Vision | Why We Do It

ISACS schools empower all students to contribute and thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Core Values | Ideas We Live By

Equity, Integrity, Continuous Improvement

Equity

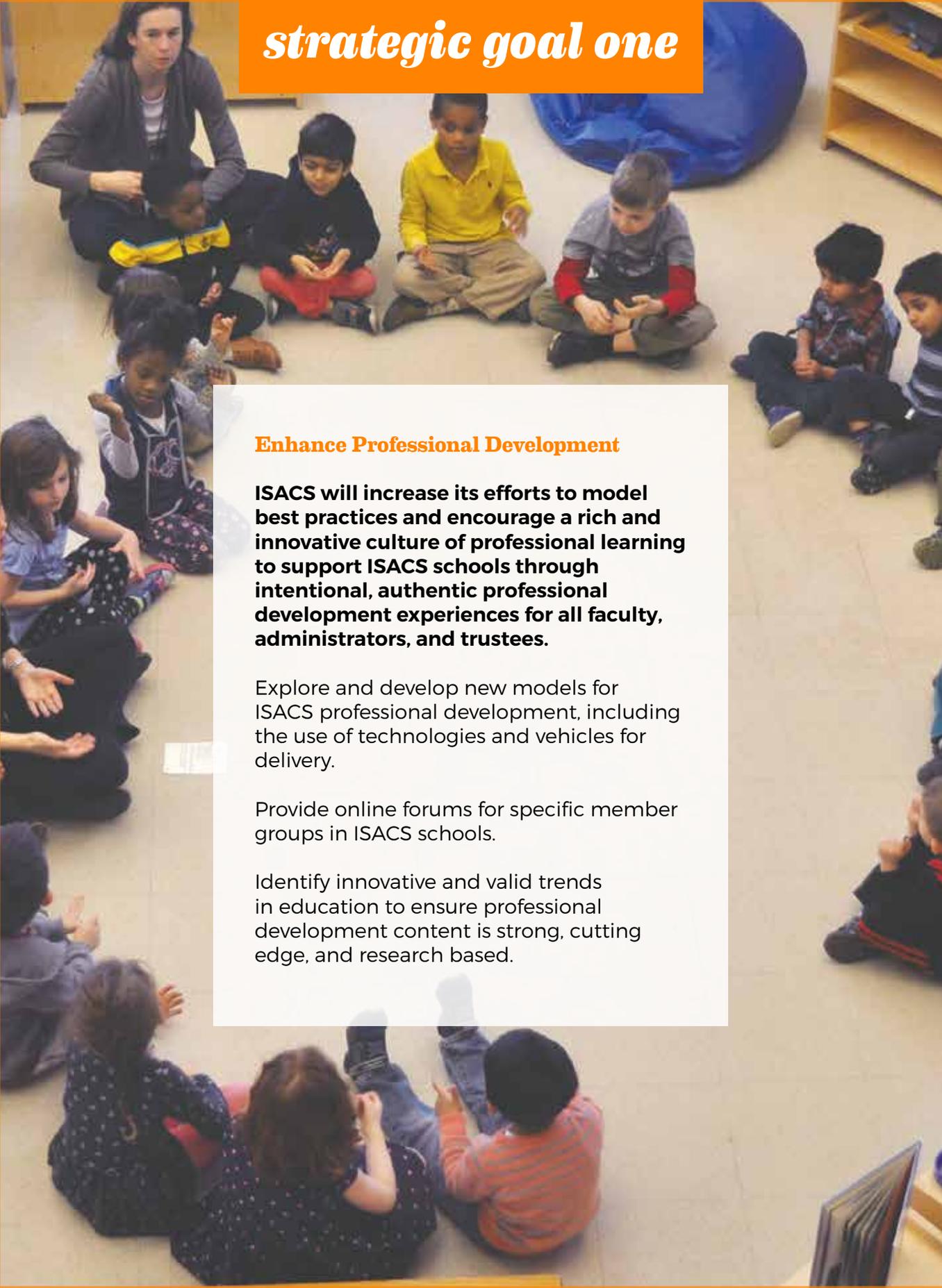
- Promoting the health and well-being of all member schools and individuals in their communities, whatever their identity.
- Moving our schools and our association toward embracing difference while recognizing our commonalities and learning from each other.
- Promoting respect, the foundation of equity.

Integrity

- Measuring each school against its success in meeting its own mission.
- Serving members and making decisions in a manner that is fair, honest, ethical, trustworthy, and based in principle.
- Developing strategic direction and initiatives in a context of mindfulness of our purpose and “the whole.”

Continuous Improvement

- Providing a system of accreditation based in institutional self-reflection that facilitates a continuous process for schools to become “their best selves,” well aligned with good practice.
- Offering resources and services that help schools and individual educators learn and thrive.
- Using goal setting, data analysis, and reflection as an association to consider and direct our own work.

A photograph of a teacher sitting on the floor in a classroom, surrounded by a group of young children. The teacher is on the left, looking towards the children. The children are sitting in a circle, some looking at the teacher and others looking at each other. The classroom has a blue beanbag chair and a wooden shelf in the background.

strategic goal one

Enhance Professional Development

ISACS will increase its efforts to model best practices and encourage a rich and innovative culture of professional learning to support ISACS schools through intentional, authentic professional development experiences for all faculty, administrators, and trustees.

Explore and develop new models for ISACS professional development, including the use of technologies and vehicles for delivery.

Provide online forums for specific member groups in ISACS schools.

Identify innovative and valid trends in education to ensure professional development content is strong, cutting edge, and research based.

strategic goal two

Enhance the Accreditation Process

ISACS will ensure that the organization continues to be recognized as a leader among independent school accrediting associations and position it for future growth opportunities and continual improvement.

Improve and expand the training of visiting team leaders and members.

Review and enhance the accreditation process to better meet the needs of the pluralism of our membership.

Define and communicate the value of ISACS accreditation to current and potential members as well as public understanding of the value of accreditation by ISACS.

Hold schools accountable to continuous improvement in order to create and sustain an inclusive learning environment that supports all learners.

Consider and prepare ISACS' future position in accrediting hybrid or non-traditional educational programs by developing the guiding principles which will enable informed and thoughtful membership and accreditation decisions and ensure the continued integrity of the accreditation process.

Consider the positive or negative impact of increased membership.

Consistently and regularly research and assess the value of new trends and practices in accreditation to ensure that ISACS remains a leader among accrediting associations.





strategic goal three

Enhance Equity and Justice

Through accreditation and other services, the Association will require and support the work of each ISACS school to provide an equitable, affirming, safe, and just environment.

Require and support the work of each ISACS school to provide an equitable, affirming, safe, and just environment through the accreditation process.

Review and enhance, as needed, our professional development offerings and online resources relevant to this goal.

Develop greater mindfulness about equity and justice relative to board composition and function.



strategic goal four

Enhance Leadership, Governance, and Infrastructure

The Association will complete a review of ISACS leadership and governance structures, processes, and procedures and consider revisions necessary to support the current and future needs of ISACS.

Form an internal group to conduct the review and make recommendations to the ISACS Board.

Review ISACS staffing to determine sufficiency to provide services and leadership consistent with ISACS mission and goals and make recommendations to the ISACS Executive Committee.

Conduct a review of ISACS' other resources and tools to determine whether they are sufficient to provide current and future services to our membership and effectively and efficiently operate as a membership organization.

Develop a five-year financial plan and capital budget to support the implementation plans developed by the ISACS strategic planning process.

strategic goal five

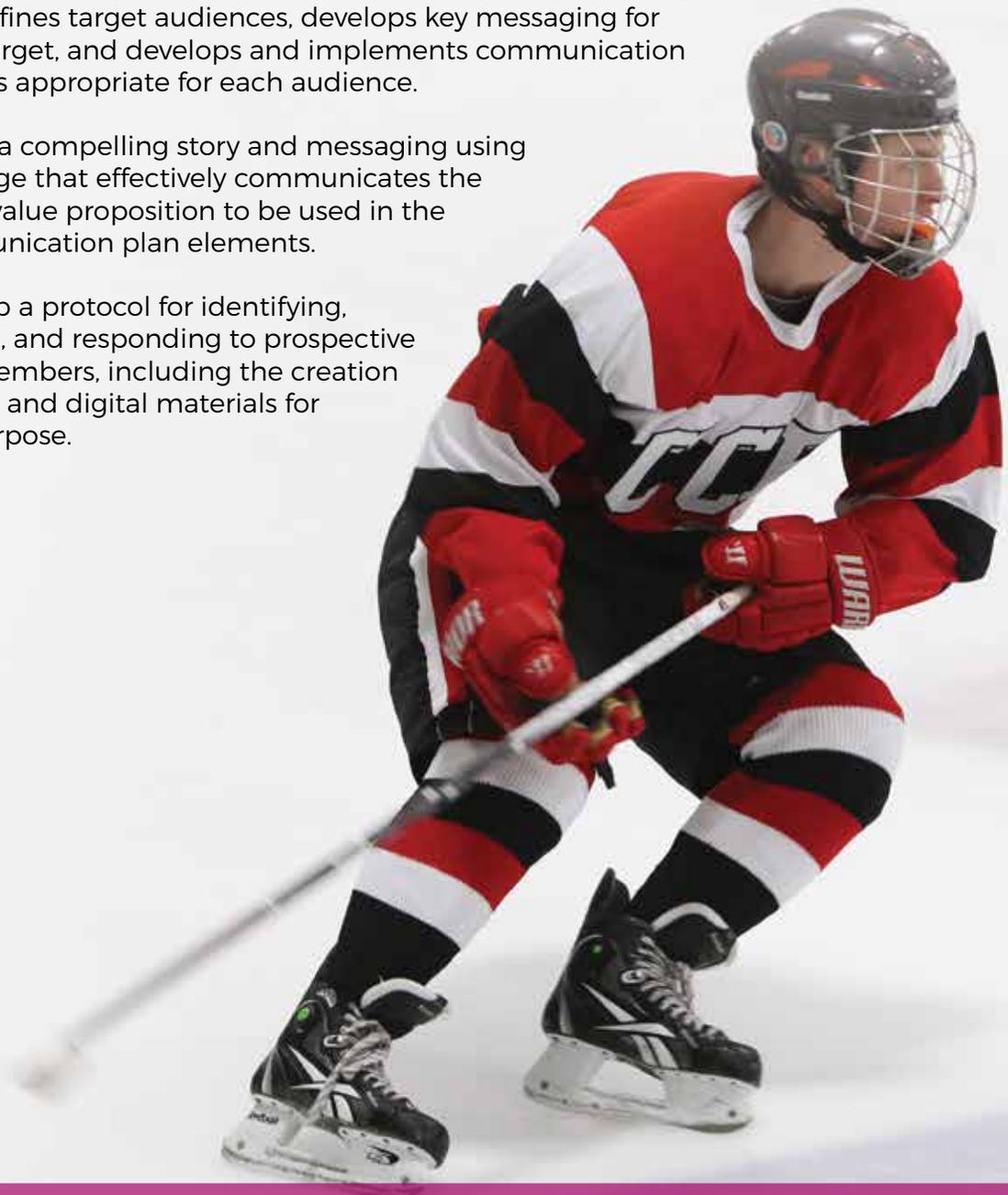
Expand Branding and Promotion

Promote awareness and understanding among members, prospective members, and the public of the unique value of membership in and accreditation by ISACS, ensuring that schools understand why they should strive to be accredited by ISACS and that parents are informed about why they should choose an ISACS accredited school.

Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan that defines target audiences, develops key messaging for each target, and develops and implements communication vehicles appropriate for each audience.

Create a compelling story and messaging using language that effectively communicates the ISACS value proposition to be used in the communication plan elements.

Develop a protocol for identifying, inviting, and responding to prospective new members, including the creation of print and digital materials for this purpose.



ISACS board & staff

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Old Trail School

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ISACS Staff

Claudia Daggett, *President*

Robin Breslin, *Director of Finance*

Jacob Isaac, *Coordinator of Programs and Technology*

Andy Gilla, *Coordinator of Accreditation, Research, and Development*

Kevin Rooney, *Director of Accreditation*

Jill Webb, *Director of Professional Development*

Karen Zeitlin, *Director of Programs*



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