

St. Anne's School of Annapolis Strategic Plan Compass for the Future 2007-2011

Mission

St. Anne's School of Annapolis invests in the intellectual and spiritual promise of each student in a community that celebrates diversity and values the dignity of every human being. We challenge students to think critically and creatively, to know themselves as learners, and to govern their lives with confidence, compassion and integrity. St. Anne's School draws from its Episcopal tradition as an independent, co-educational school, to best serve students in preschool through eighth grade.

Dear Parents, Staff, Alumni and Friends,
We invite you to share in our story and in our journey.

Together, over the past 14 years, we have built the foundation for a vibrant and challenging academic program infused with a respectful, compassionate and spiritually alive environment.

During the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS) accreditation process and the development of our first five-year strategic plan, our school identified five principal goals for St. Anne's School of Annapolis:

- Attract and retain the very best faculty
- Develop a top-flight academic program in the tradition of Episcopal Schools across the nation
- Build the school's financial strength
- Encourage greater diversity in a respectful, supportive environment
- Build and maintain a facility and technological structure to support the program

We are proud of the tremendous progress we have made in achieving these initiatives. For example, through competitive compensation and shared leadership we have shaped a cohesive team of highly competent faculty and staff. We increased cohesion in our academic program and took specific measures to strengthen areas such as middle school mathematics, fine arts, and our early childhood program. We dramatically improved our campus with a new soft turf field, sidewalks and meditation garden.

Nevertheless, we still have work to do.

St. Anne's School occupies a unique niche in the local independent school market. We are the only preschool through grade eight, independent, Episcopal School in the Annapolis area. Our Episcopal foundation is our core strength and the hallmark that sets us apart from our independent school peers. We offer a distinctive learning environment that fully supports the way children learn best – classes alive with curiosity, creativity and challenge; an inclusive, compassionate and spiritually rich environment; and a philosophy that values reason and inquiry as a path to true understanding.

In order to capitalize on our unique position, however, we must address our most critical challenges. One year ago we initiated a new strategic planning process to chart a course for our journey to meet these challenges and reach new heights over the next five years.

We began with a fact finding phase that included data gathering and outreach to stakeholders in the St. Anne's School community through focus groups and a workshop. Using this background, the strategic planning group drafted a vision statement that reflects the collective aspirations for where St. Anne's School hopes to be by the end of the new five-year plan. With this foundation, the strategic planning group systematically evaluated the School's strengths and weaknesses against the backdrop of the evolving landscape for independent schools nationwide and in the immediate Annapolis area. It was informative to find that our internal list of key issues matched up well with a list of the top strategic issues facing independent schools across the nation published by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) in 2005:

I. Financing the school of the 21st century in a dynamic, sustainable model

St. Anne's School must achieve an optimal enrollment, based on a sustainable model that reflects the changing demographics of the Annapolis area. Funding projects through a major gifts campaign and planning for financial security through the establishment of an endowment are key tools in sustaining a viable financial model for our school.

II. Recruiting, retaining and rewarding quality faculty and administrators

The talented staff at St. Anne's School is our most precious resource. We must enhance professional development opportunities to ensure that our school continues to attract and retain a strong and talented team. Investment in what is core - the people of St. Anne's School and their professional growth - is critical to our school's success as a top flight program.

III. Communicating to internal and external audiences

Distinguishing St. Anne's School with clear, concise messages is essential to better inform members of our internal community, as well as solidify our reputation in the greater community.

IV. Creating diverse and supportive environments

St. Anne's School has always been proud of its efforts to be an inclusive community that affirms the dignity of every member. With increased diversity and our goal to continue to increase diversity in every constituency, we must examine our curriculum and our culture to assure that we are truly a welcoming community that promotes understanding and respect for all people. We also need to provide opportunities to engage our families in healthy dialogue about diversity goals, challenges and progress.

V. Managing and evaluating programs

St. Anne's School must continue to develop assessment tools, including alumni tracking, for demonstration of our success in preparing students for the academic rigor of top college preparatory programs. One area that is particularly difficult to articulate and to evaluate is our social curriculum and leadership training program that is core to our Episcopal identity. Meaningful leadership experiences prepare students well for both the social and academic challenges of high school. We must continue to enrich the opportunities for leadership and ethical formation for our students and seek effective means of measuring these programs.

With our Compass for the Future we are confident that we can continue to have remarkable success – together as a community. We hope that you will take the time to read this roadmap and be an active participant on the journey!

Sincerely,

Frances Lukens
Head of School

Debra Larsson
Chair, Board of Trustees

James Stolarski
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee

Securing the Future

St. Anne's School of Annapolis aspires to be the premier independent school of its kind in the Annapolis area. To accomplish this, the School must achieve five strategic goals within the next five years.

- I. Invest in what is core – people and program**
- II. Build an inclusive and welcoming community**
- III. Strengthen our foundation – finances and facilities**
- IV. Communicate the School's strengths**
- V. Remain Visionary**

I. Invest in what is core—people and program

*The people at St. Anne's School of Annapolis – students, staff, alumni and trustees—are the **heart** of the School, bringing ideas, expertise, talent and energy to living out our mission and program. Our school's Episcopal identity is its **soul**, elevating the process of education from a simple intellectual pursuit to the shaping of individuals who will lead lives of consequence. St. Anne's students grow not just in knowledge but in wisdom, not just in critical thought but in compassion.*

A program of this caliber requires very special teachers with the tools and expertise to build upon each student's strengths and the ability to challenge and advance the students intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

Objectives:

- Sustain and enhance our school's demanding academic program
 - Commit resources to optimize professional development opportunities to keep faculty and staff abreast of nationally recognized best practices, assessment tools and current research about how children learn
- Cement our school's Episcopal identity
 - Cultivate the spiritually and socially aware environment that provides context for the School's challenging academics
 - Equip the students for leadership
 - Enrich the sacredness of chapel experiences
- Create the Teacher/Learner Collaborative that promotes the professional expertise of our faculty to other educators in the greater Annapolis area and establishes the School as a center for faculty professional development

II. Build an inclusive and welcoming community

The St. Anne's School of Annapolis community recognizes the power in the mix of diverse minds, experiences, cultures and perspectives. In today's world, an education is incomplete without global perspective and an understanding of differences and commonalities among people. By embracing diversity and facing the obstacles that exist within the society at large, our school can promote greater equality and justice in the St. Anne's School community and demonstrate to others the value and powerful connections that are made when we put our differences to work.

Objectives:

- Commit to a welcoming environment that engages parents in respectful dialogue
- Ensure our messages about diversity are clear, consistent and compelling
- Fully integrate multicultural and global awareness education
- Recruit and retain staff, students and trustees who reflect the diverse makeup of the greater community
- Establish a Distinguished Speaker Series to bring together leading educators, authors and researchers to provide a forum for learning and discussion on the latest research and issues in education including multicultural awareness, child development, and other issues of interest to parents and educators

III. Strengthen our Foundation – Finances and Facilities

Given national and local demographic data and economic trends, the School must reach and maintain optimal enrollment to secure its financial foundation, and acquire other sources of financial support – including increased annual philanthropic dollars and major gift campaigns, auxiliary programs and grants to carry out strategic initiatives.

Objectives:

- Maintain target enrollment
- Build the endowment
- Increase non-tuition income from Annual Fund, Major Gifts, Events, Grants and Business Sponsorships
- Complete master facilities and replacement reserve plan and five-year financial plan
- Address transportation challenges faced by families living outside of the School's immediate community to broaden our enrollment pool

IV. Communicate the School's strengths

St. Anne's School occupies a unique position as the only preschool through grade eight independent, Episcopal school in the area. Our school must capture its unique niche in the marketplace through an image campaign that clearly articulates the benefits of our distinctive program – challenging academics paired with an emphasis on social and spiritual awareness, in a grade-level configuration and class size that allow optimal focus of time, attention and resources on each individual student.

Objectives:

- Develop a branding program that articulates clearly the distinguishing features of a St. Anne's School education
- Refine communications strategies to define the program benefits more effectively
- Optimize Community Programs Initiative to provide awareness of the School's mission in the broader community and introduce potential students and their families to the School
- Publish the accomplishments of our alumni that reflect their St. Anne's School education

V. Remain Visionary

Sustained academic excellence requires a future oriented mindset and a commitment to remain visionary on the part of the School's leadership. Even as we focus most of our attention and resources on four goals, we will explore other opportunities for growth and program enhancements beyond the scope of this plan.

Objectives:

- Research options for separate site for the Early Childhood and Community Programs
- Research space and facility needs required to sustain and enhance our educational program

Our Vision: St. Anne's School of Annapolis 2007-2012

Early in the process, the strategic planning group drafted a vision statement reflecting the collective aspirations for St. Anne's School of Annapolis. A commitment by the St. Anne's School community to achieving the five strategic goals will take significant steps toward making this vision a reality:

St. Anne's School of Annapolis, an independent, Episcopal, co-educational school:

Serves motivated and capable students in preschool through eighth grade. St. Anne's School prepares students for **demanding college preparatory schools through a challenging program that develops the whole child**: intellectually, spiritually and physically. The School has earned a reputation as *the premier institution of its kind* in the greater Annapolis area. Our graduates enter high school intellectually poised to meet the challenges of the future with passion, courage and purpose.

Pairs a **rigorous academic program** with an emphasis on **social awareness and spirituality**. Our **passionate and diverse faculty** are devoted to a **rich and dynamic learning environment**. The program is rooted in **nationally recognized best practices and research** about how children learn.

Boasts an **extensive array of signature programs** supporting the development of the whole child. Among these are locally recognized programs in **fine arts, life skills, and leadership**. The School's **admired athletic program** is competitive yet very inclusive, responding to student athletes of all skill levels. St. Anne's School athletics emphasizes the **spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship, and the appreciation of life long wellness**.

Fosters an **inclusive community** that welcomes and values families from **diverse backgrounds** who share the commitment to the school's mission and vision. St. Anne's School is a responsive community member, offering enriching programs that reach out to others in the community of all ages.

Enjoys **facilities that support its growing academic, athletic and fine arts programs** at all grade levels. Its **technology infrastructure is current**, enriching the work of its students, faculty and administration.

Thrives under the **visionary leadership** of its Head of School and Board of Trustees, who are dedicated stewards of the School's future.

Benefits from a **strong financial foundation** supported by an optimal enrollment, a **growing endowment** and widely supported giving programs. This enables the school to attract and retain **top-flight faculty**, construct and maintain the facilities required to support its mission and offer the **financial aid** necessary to support its goal to be a fully inclusive school.

What You Can Do:

The School and this community already reflect many of the values and aspirations in this vision – but bringing it to full fruition will truly ensure a dynamic and sustainable future for St. Anne's School of Annapolis. Every member of our community has a role to play. Please take time to learn how you can be part of our **Compass for the Future!**