

THE ISLAND SCHOOL  
Sustaining What Matters Most  
Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019

## Mission

At The Island School we educate each of our children; we nourish their innate curiosity, inspire a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, and foster respect and appreciation for themselves and others. At The Island School, every child matters.

## Introduction

- I. Entering its fourth decade, The Island School reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to meeting each child's unique needs. The school's educational practices continue to be firmly grounded in doing what is best for children, with current research echoing what The Island School has advocated since its inception: that children should enjoy school, should love learning, and should feel safe and celebrated in their school community. The Island School provides an environment that balances the needs and interests of each student with the needs and interests of the class and school community. Our approach to education is holistic, addressing the vital role our school plays in the social and emotional, as well as academic, education of our children. Values and expectations in our school include respect, compassion, inclusion, social responsibility and a celebration of differences, all of which create a safe haven that encourages children to take healthy risks and to try new things.
- II. Today's students are preparing for positions that do not yet exist, using tools not yet developed to solve problems not yet identified. Therefore, our program provides a strong academic foundation by teaching critical thinking, creativity, flexibility, confidence, curiosity, adaptability and strong communication. The belief in these values and skills, along with the importance of play, of fun and of joy in learning, remains a hallmark of The Island School's educational experience. The School is committed to ensuring that, in addition to gaining an excellent education, children can be children in this cherished season of childhood as they learn how to be good people.
- III. In order for The Island School to preserve this unique educational culture and experience, the next decade of its evolution must focus on long-term sustainability. The most effective way to achieve that during these uncertain economic times is to pursue a clear and thoughtful plan for maintaining the high quality of our program through the most effective use of our resources. This Strategic Plan, which reflects many months of dedicated and thoughtful discussion and work by many individuals from The Island School and the broader community, is offered as a dynamic and flexible set of guidelines intended to adapt to changing circumstances and to provide clear direction for our school's success, presently and forever.
- IV. The Island School now offers a rich and wonderful educational program in a beautiful setting, strong and diverse enrollment, a gifted and very experienced faculty, a highly effective administrative team, a mature and diversely talented Board, and full accreditation by the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS). The school is financially secure due to careful and conservative budgeting and realistic strategic planning, both of which ensure the highest possible quality in our educational program. Having fully implemented all major goals outlined in its last Strategic Plan, The Island School is now ready to launch the next important phase of its development as a mature and sustainable school; thus we offer this Strategic Plan for a sustainable future.

## I. Best Educational Practices

Engage in an ongoing evaluation of The Island School's educational program, staffing and parent partnerships in order to recognize and cultivate each child's potential.

### A. Educational Programs

- Continue to build the deeply collaborative relationship between faculty and administration.
- Continue to systematically review curricula to ensure that content and instructional practices continue to reflect the school's values and goals.
- Continue to celebrate diversity in all aspects of the school's educational program and community.

### B. Faculty and Staff

- Ensure that The Island School continues to be the most magnetic teaching environment in the community for retaining and attracting the best teachers, by utilizing school values and culture as selling points for prospective faculty and by developing a competitive compensation and benefits package.
- Expand educational opportunities for the faculty, administration and board that support professional development, program expertise and the school's culture and that build morale.
- Develop a succession plan for retiring faculty and administration.

### C. Parent Partnerships

- Continue bringing parents into a collaborative partnership with teachers and the school.
- Continue to educate all families about developmentally relevant topics and introduce new families to the school's culture using the Kindergarten Parent Night program as a model.
- Continue to encourage and educate families about opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and school.

## II. Cultural Continuity

Sustain, reinforce and build upon The Island School culture for future generations.

### A. Clarify, articulate and document the culture of the school.

- Continue to identify how the school communicates its culture from person to person and class to class, and find ways to sustain and enhance that process with a focus on the unique culture of inclusion and a firm commitment to the core, non-negotiable values.
- Develop and implement a plan for collecting stories from current and past students, families, faculty and staff, in order to capture, preserve and share our unique culture as well as to market the school, including exploring a variety of media for capturing and sharing, insuring content is appealing to various audiences and providing the necessary resources to implement the plan.

### B. Develop a retention and recruitment strategy that ensures the faculty, administration and Board of Trustees are representative of the school's values and culture.

- Continue to review, improve, implement and document the intensive process for hiring new employees in order to effectively evaluate a prospective faculty or staff member's compatibility with the school's values and culture.
- Ensure that the composition of the Board of Trustees reflects a balance of the school's needs and constituencies across the entire community.

### C. Expand upon traditions and special events for students and parents, beginning at kindergarten and continuing through graduation.

- Facilitate opportunities for experienced parents to partner with new parents at The Island School in order to serve as a resource and to help convey the culture.
- Continue to create opportunities for active communication with alumni and their families.
- Expand opportunities to share the culture of The Island School with new families at the school and with the broader community.

### III. School Advancement

Establish that every member of the Kitsap community will know about The Island School and that every family with school-age children will consider The Island School as an educational option.

- A. Optimize enrollment so that the school can continue to offer, and build upon, its unique educational program.
  - Continue to recruit a diverse student population that matches the school's mission and culture.
  - Continue articulating and capitalizing on The Island School's unique marketing niche by focusing on what differentiates the school from other educational programs and what makes it invaluable to the community.
  - Maintain a mobile-optimized, social media-friendly website that showcases the quality and unique spirit of The Island School in an engaging way, so as to increase the likelihood that prospective families inquire and apply to the school.
  - Establish an appropriate social media presence to augment the school's website with social platforms that facilitate the publication of fresh content.
  - Develop and implement a plan for collecting stories from current and past students, families, faculty and staff, in order to capture, preserve and share our unique culture as well as to market the school, including exploring a variety of media for capturing and sharing, insuring content is appealing to various audiences and providing the necessary resources to implement the plan.
- B. Explore ways to position The Island School as the authority by sharing expertise on developmentally appropriate education for children in kindergarten through fifth grade within the broader community.

### IV. Resource Sustainability

Strengthen The Island School's resource sustainability by continuing to pursue human resources priorities, monitor budgetary discipline, diversify revenue sources and build reserve capital.

- A. Optimize enrollment so that the school can continue to offer, and build upon, its unique educational program.
- B. Ensure a staffing structure that fully supports the effective operation of the school and the quality of the educational program and provide the necessary resources to do so.
- C. Ensure that The Island School continues to be the most magnetic educational environment in the community for retaining and attracting the best faculty and staff, by utilizing school values and culture as selling points for prospective faculty and staff and by developing a competitive compensation and benefits package.
- D. Develop a succession plan for retiring faculty and administration.
- E. Maintain a long-range financial plan that incorporates the elements defined by the Strategic Plan and that supports the growth of the school, expands the financial aid and professional development programs, and builds operating and plant replacement reserves.
- F. Continue to develop a comprehensive strategic fundraising plan to support implementation of the Strategic Plan goals.
  - Develop an ongoing major gifts fundraising strategy, and expand fundraising capabilities by nurturing relationships with existing donors and fostering relationships with new donors.
  - Develop Board capacity to support relationships with major donors.
  - Continue discussion regarding an endowment strategy.
  - Continue to prioritize financial aid and professional development in fundraising efforts.