

The CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOLS *of* VIRGINIA

Opening Minds...Opening Doors: The Roadmap for our Future

The Congressional Schools of Virginia is celebrating its 70th year of operation. During that time, the schools have weathered good and bad economic times, the development of the regional public school system and their gifted and talented programs and many other challenges. The consistent response was to evolve and adapt the Schools and their strategies to the ever changing environment. The Board of Trustees undertaking a new strategic plan, with a twenty year vision from 2008 to 2028 and with a set of goals and strategies for beginning immediately to bring that vision into reality.

The Board has adopted an updated mission statement as a fundamental first step in support of the strategic planning initiative.

The mission of The Congressional Schools of Virginia is to prepare children, through an innovative and accelerated curriculum, to embrace the opportunities and responsibilities they will face as global citizens.

The vision of the Congressional Schools is to offer educational excellence in our dynamic, and at the same time our, safe and nurturing environment. We send young men and women into the world with a drive for excellence and broad horizons, tempered with an understanding of their need as adults to participate fully in understanding others and enriching society. The successful preparation of our students and realization of the Congressional mission depends on all of our resources – teachers, parents, staff, curricula, facility, technology, neighbors, businesses and the students themselves – working in concert to provide support, opportunity and involvement.

This plan identifies the goals and strategies for how Congressional Schools will accomplish its mission. By carefully re-examining its mission and establishing these goals, the board intends for this document to provide the road map for the planning and implementation of those strategies.

This document is a collaborative effort by Trustees, faculty and staff and parents. In undertaking this process, we are reminded of what we treasure most about Congressional: our excellent academic program, our dedicated and committed faculty and staff, our strong sense of community, and our enchanting 40 acre campus inside the Beltway, and the collective impact of these resources on our students.

Our hope is that this plan contributes to a common understanding of the mission and vision by all stakeholders of the school. We look forward to continuing the involvement of all of our community to work collaboratively and inclusively to accomplish this exciting vision and ensuring the continued success of the Congressional Schools of Virginia for many more years than the next twenty.

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Faculty First Initiative - Faculty and Staff

Congressional strives to be the employer of choice for faculty and staff who thrive in the independent school environment. We are working to retain and attract teachers who are motivated, experienced and committed to our students, parents and community. We are constantly working to support our faculty by improving classroom environments and by providing innovative methodologies and technologies to support the delivery of our accelerated, enriched and challenging curriculum.

Goal: Become the employer of choice for faculty and staff within the competitive independent school environment.

Strategies:

- Retain and attract employees through creative and competitive compensation packages.
- Provide holistic support of faculty through open dialogue with administrators, innovative technology and moving resources close to and into the classroom, where possible.
- Develop a culture of continual improvement of faculty development.
- Develop diverse teacher role models for our students, including international diversity and diversity of teaching experience and expertise.

Goal: Expand professional development of faculty.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement adjustments to time schedules and spaces to engender faculty teamwork.
- Ensure faculty continuing education and professional development activities within the school year.
- Encourage the development of faculty and staff through a more formal performance evaluation process where individuals develop personal and professional goals and objectives each year.

Goal: Support the delivery of the accelerated curriculum.

Strategies:

- Establish alliances with local universities to add student teachers and interns into the classroom.
- Launch new, summer educational camp offerings to provide enriching and supplemental (core and foreign language) educational instruction.
- Identify and adopt effective educational/tutorial methods and tools to assist students acquire necessary reading, math and foreign language skills.
- Establish Admissions Advisory Committee to assist in the evaluation and placement of incoming students.
- Develop pilot program for peer tutoring.
- Develop and distribute annual survey for Grades 6 – 8 and young alumni to assess student perspective of their academic experience.

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Global Programs

Congressional provides an accelerated curriculum enriched with cross-disciplinary teaching, team orientation and international perspectives. We continuously look for new methods to provide our faculty the means to create, shape and develop interactive and interdisciplinary curriculum to engage and challenge our students. The curriculum goes beyond academics and includes development of the whole child, focusing on character, respect for others and encouragement of individual areas of excellence. The School takes advantage of the many opportunities afforded by the surrounding metropolitan area to broaden student experience and provide settings in which to exercise the values we champion.

Goal: Enhance and strengthen capabilities and programs which promote global citizenship.

Strategies:

- Supplement and strengthen existing foreign language offerings.
- Pilot an extra curricular fourth language offering for 2009 - 2010 school year to assess demand.
- Assess the feasibility of pursuing the International Baccalaureate accreditation.
- Evaluate and form alliances with local, national and international institutions to promote and enrich our curriculum and broaden our emerging global citizen's outlook and perspective.
- Investigate teacher exchange programs and in-residence opportunities to enrich our global culture.

Goal: Enhance math, sciences and technology curriculum.

Strategies:

- Evaluate curriculum to enhance and strengthen math and science programs, with specific emphasis on 7th and 8th grade offerings.
- Continue annual School Improvement Plan process and ongoing curriculum review.
- Explore and incorporate relevant, new technologies into the classroom and within the curriculum as technology evolves.

Goal: Develop a "Resource Center" to assure mastery of the accelerated curriculum for all students.

Strategies:

- Assess and evaluate current and future needs of the student body to assist students and provide supplemental instruction and materials with the goal of ensuring the success of each child in mastering the accelerated curriculum.
- Develop a cohesive model for the coordination of supplemental materials, use of technology and individual instruction requirements.

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Goal: Explore the feasibility of re-instituting the High School to the Congressional school family.

Strategy:

- In 2009 - 2010 evaluate feasibility of adding a High School back into the Congressional family of schools.

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Student Population

The student population is a defining factor of the schools' history and reputation. We currently have representation of over 25 nationalities within our student body. The communities involved in the school value the diversity and international nature of the current population. Enrollment is an essential, critical and ongoing strategic goal for Congressional. Enrollment methods require utilization of traditional mechanisms and the development of new, creative and innovative strategies to extend our reach and ability to attract students. Maximizing enrollment allows the school to offer very competitive tuition rates for our families as well as the ability to achieve other operating objectives.

Goal: Achieve and maintain full enrollment of 425 (BB - 8th).

Strategies:

- Evaluate current methods of recruitment for effectiveness and supplement with new and innovative methods to recruit students.
- Identify areas currently unserved or underserved, develop and implement recruitment plans.
- Update formal marketing plan for recruitment.
- Utilize website to communicate effectively the reasons students and families will benefit from our program of academic and educational excellence.
- Maximize annual student retention.
- Develop Financial Aid program to attract and sustain enrollment for appropriate students.
- Investigate ways to accommodate more sections in lower grades and flexible student grouping.
- Review transportation program to maximize our service radius.

Goal: Attract and enroll more international students.

Strategies:

- Formalize alliances with international schools with similar philosophies to develop exchange programs.
- Identify community members, businesses and institutions with international alliances to develop recruitment plans.
- Develop Home Stay program to benefit both Congressional families and international students.

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Campus and Facilities

The Congressional 40 acre campus and facilities are recognized as a key enabler of the school's mission. They provide a safe, functional and attractive environment that enhances student learning and growth. The long term stewardship and sustainability of these important assets is ensured by well considered plans for future construction, maintenance and operations while retaining flexibility in accommodating issues such as future technologies, changing costs of energy resources and environmental safety.

Goal: Expand, upgrade and maintain sustainable, environmentally friendly (green), secure facilities that enhance the learning environment, and the quality of student life, and have the ability to support the community, while maintaining the natural beauty and green space of the campus.

Strategies:

- Develop Campus Master Plan that projects facilities renewals and expansions in tiers for immediate, mid- and long-term timeframes.
- Pursue green solutions for transportation, facilities renewal, renovation, and new construction.
- Achieve LEED (The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification (Silver to Gold).
- Investigate developing middle school boarding program and faculty housing on/near campus.

Goal: Minimize future maintenance requirements and operational costs.

Strategies:

- Determine a facilities condition base line through an independent condition assessment.
- Prioritize vital/emergency repairs/needs.
- Modernize the schools maintenance process using tools such as Reliability Centered Maintenance (RCM), Predictive Testing and Inspection, and building/system commissioning.
- Pursue utility efficient upgrades that are green, sustainable and maintainable, and take advantage of modern maintenance processes.

Goal: Appropriately Provision for Plant Renovation, Renewal, and Special Maintenance (PPRRSM) budget based on projected/estimated needs.

Strategies:

- The facilities condition assessment and master plan will provide information to establish resource requirements based on needs.
- Pursue special funding or contracting programs, such as local, state, or federal renewable energy grants, Energy Savings Performance Contracts or other performance based contracting mechanisms.

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Goal: Develop and implement a business continuity plan to insure the ability to continuously provide services under emergency and/or pandemic conditions.

Strategies:

- Examine key business functions, redundancy and back up requirements.
- Identify alternative methods to provide and deliver services.
- Develop and implement a written business continuity plan, regularly train appropriate staff concerning the plan, and communicate relevant portions of the plan to parents of children in Congressional Schools and Camps.

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Technology

Congressional takes advantage of innovative and supportive technologies to deliver curriculum, communicate, and organize operations. We use technology in the teaching and learning environment for innovation and creative exploration.

Goal: Build and maintain a technological infrastructure to support the delivery of educational offerings to create and maintain a competitive edge for the school and students.

Strategies:

- Promote an advanced Information Technology curriculum for school and camp.
- Expand the school's capabilities for teleconferencing, distant learning, and other global learning initiatives.
- Explore design options for classrooms that can efficiently support power and furniture needs for emerging technologies.
- Expand the use of portable and other emerging technologies.
- Explore virtual schooling options as a branch of Congressional Schools.

Goal: Leverage technology to lower operating costs and enable efficient administration of the school.

Strategies:

- Expand use of the Congressional online portal to promote learning, scheduling and handling of administrative affairs.
- Expand opportunities for social networking within the CSOV family (current and alumni) through use of new technologies to support growth and gather new ideas for all school related areas.
- Incorporate technology requirements as a part of all plant and maintenance plans.
- Develop multi-year tiered technology plan to ensure periodic assessment of utilization, application and innovation.
- Move to online school registration.
- Develop training programs to maximize use by all constituencies.

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Parents

The successful delivery of the accelerated curriculum and the social development of young students require an effort that extends beyond the staff and campus of our school. We encourage the partnership between school and home in the education of its student body by delivering a consistent message that parents play a key role in the academic and personal development of their children. Social connections between Congressional families and students are fostered both on- and off-campus. These interactions enrich the overall experience for families attending the school, encourage and facilitate greater participation in school events and have a positive effect on retention, enrollment and alumni relations. The Congressional Schools' Parents' Organization (CSPO) supports these efforts and also reaches out to camp families to engage them throughout the year and welcome them into the broader community.

Goal: Effectively communicate the Congressional vision, mission, activities and accomplishments to its constituents and broader community.

Strategies:

- Conduct an audit of the school's methods of communication to develop insights about the effectiveness of different means of communication, preferences by certain stakeholder groups for a means of communicating and what types of information should be "pushed" and which can be referenced when needed.
- Ensure each family is educated about Congressional culture and the Strategic Plan.

Goal: Expand communication and engagement plans for parents and faculty in conjunction with curriculum plans to enhance and support academic excellence and character development.

Strategies:

- Continue emphasis on Family-School Partnership.
- Work with teachers and parents to determine reasonable expectations for effective parent engagement in student studies.
- Continue to ensure the academic progress and social development of students are evaluated, measured, and appropriately communicated.
- Sponsor social functions for parents and families of the Congressional Schools and also for Congressional Camps families.

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Community

Meeting the community challenge requires committed involvement by parents, sustained association of our alumni and active outreach to the many governmental, cultural and business entities in the Washington, DC area. We will work to develop a robust and sustaining alumni community, through which alumni can mentor each other and current students, network socially and professionally, and provide resources for institutional advancement. We will build upon and expand our connections in the international community to enhance our students' knowledge and awareness of other cultures and global issues, and create more opportunities for them to explore the world. We are developing relationships with businesses and municipalities that provide real world perspectives and opportunities for Congressional students and young alumni, as well as presenting opportunities to draw on their areas of expertise and resources. We continue to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with our immediate community and neighbors that encourages their sponsorship and assistance.

Goal: Advance and promote relationships with the Congressional alumni.

Strategies:

- Leverage web technologies to strengthen and sustain the alumni community to develop a complete database of Congressional alumni, ensure continued alumni communication and create a social network for Congressional alumni to leverage after graduation from the school.
- Integrate outreach and connection between current students and alumni into the curriculum.
- Develop and distribute annual alumni survey.

Goal: Develop strategic relationships with businesses, associations and campus neighbors.

Strategies:

- Develop and market opportunities for businesses and associations to contribute to Congressional activities with commensurate advertising.
- Ensure administrators and Board leaders attend business and civic association meetings and develop relationships with leaders.
- Develop a set of outreach activities spanning the calendar year that gives our neighbors access to school leaders and a chance to discuss school issues that affect them.
- Develop outreach activities that will build upon and expand alliances with the international community, including embassies, international cultural associations and educational institutions abroad.

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Strategic Finance

With the school's long-standing commitment to an accelerated curriculum, the continuation of integrating technology into every aspect of our programs, and our ongoing efforts to prepare children for global citizenship, the resources required to maintain and expand the superior educational offerings provided by Congressional are greater than ever. To that end, we will consistently strive to maintain an affordable tuition structure and to provide financial assistance to those who qualify. We also seek to provide competitive compensation to faculty and staff, and develop a supportive parent community. Adherence to these four tenets will expand the scope of those capable of benefiting from the Congressional educational experience yet will require that tuition be supplemented by other sources of revenue. So that we can remain steadfast in providing unparalleled, innovative educational experiences, maintain small class sizes, and continue to attract and retain the most qualified faculty and staff, a strategic financial plan is being developed that will monitor our progress, support development of other sources of revenue and identify and encourage expanded sources of philanthropic support.

Congressional's Financial Philosophy:

A. Achieve a school budget that provides cash flow sufficient to cover total school operating expenses, capital expenditures, net principal payments, and retirement obligations.

B. Allocate surplus camp revenue to fund existing priority areas of:

- Faculty Appreciation
- Camp Improvements
- Capital Initiatives
- Scholarships
- Operating Reserve

Goal: Develop and maintain a sustainable financial plan.

Strategies:

- Develop a comprehensive five-year financial plan, updated annually.
- Develop an outline of a 20-year proforma plan, updated every five years.
- Develop approaches to identify other revenue sources.

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Philanthropy

The Congressional Schools have supported and have been the beneficiary of very strong and well established summer programs. As a result, the Schools have not established a widespread culture of philanthropy nor raised tuitions commensurate with similar institutions. For Congressional to operate for the next 20 years and beyond will require a significant change in our approach and methodology to secure funding for many critical activities and outreach programs currently and in the future.

Goal: Establish and instill a culture of philanthropy.

Strategies:

- The Board will take the leadership role to promote the culture of philanthropy by establishing and meeting fundraising goals; among other goals, there will be a goal of generating an annual fundraising total of \$400,000 by FY 2011-2012. This total shall include but is not restricted to contributions to the Family of Congressional Funds (inclusive of matching funds), In-kind donations, camp, and gala/auction donations.
- Structure a constituency-based annual program to match individuals with activities that complement their specific interests.
- Build more valuable, long term relationships with key proponents of the Schools beyond our parent community.
- Improve our stewardship of our donor base.

Goal: Financially support the initiatives of the Strategic Plan.

Strategies:

- Develop, coordinate with Facilities committee and implement Capital Campaign.
- Develop fund raising campaigns, pursue grant awards, and cultivate corporate sponsorship.
- Develop and formulate plans to generate a minimum of \$20 million endowment in 2008 dollars by the year 2028.

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Governance

The Board, acting as stewards of Congressional Schools, shall provide the leadership for those policies, programs and initiatives that will best ensure the perpetuation of the organization's mission and philosophy. Trustees shall seek to guarantee ongoing excellence in education by committing to having a superior Head of School who will seek excellence in faculty, programs and facilities.

Goal: Strengthen governance.

Strategies:

- Implement the vision and philosophy statements as part of adopting the Strategic Plan.
- Support and annually evaluate the Head of School in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Develop and implement an annual Board evaluation process which includes goal setting and evaluation of entire Board, individual Board members, and Board leadership.
- Commit to culture of continual improvement of governance policy and practice.
- Redesign standing committee charges and connect annual committee goals to the strategic plan and prior evaluations.
- Undertake annual review of policies and legal responsibilities.

Goal: Encourage a culture of philanthropy.

Strategies:

- Retain and attract board members who have personal influence and financial resources to implement the strategic plan.
- Board members will make Congressional one of their highest fundraising priorities.
- The Board will be actively involved in obtaining funds for annual and capital needs.
- Develop an advisory role for prospective Board leadership development and past Board leadership retention after term expires.

Goal: Fiduciary Responsibility.

Strategies:

- Protect all tangible and non-tangible assets for the long-term benefit of Congressional Schools, in accordance with fiduciary responsibilities.
- The Board oversees the management of school operations, approving plans, initiatives and budgets.
- Adopt a strategic planning budget model.
- Draft and approve policies on risk management, finance and investment, human resources, fundraising, outreach, admissions, licensing, and accreditation.