



Penn Charter can do more than prepare students to thrive in the 21st century: **We can prepare our graduates to make a difference.**



THINKING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Just as William Penn had a vision for a school that would educate citizens for the New World, we have a vision for the future of William Penn Charter School that recognizes the demands of the 21st century global community and the skills and values our students need to thrive.

Traditional competencies are no longer enough. This new global village requires and rewards collaboration across networks and cultures. It values creativity, adaptability, and effective oral and written communication. Most of all, it prizes critical thinking and problem solving. In the words of one business leader: "... what we really need are people who can not only read the instructions but change them. They need to be able to think outside the lines."

It is time to reshape our curriculum and our campus – perhaps even the notion of "classroom" – into a new educational program that will prepare students not only for college but for life in a complex and changing world.

We approach this critical work with confidence because Penn Charter has already begun teaching for the future, with innovative curriculum and technologies, global partnerships, and a focus on sustainability. The strength of our leadership, faculty, facilities and finances positions us well to expand this work.

And we approach this work with great excitement because we can see a way that

Penn Charter can do even more than prepare students to thrive: We can prepare our graduates to make a difference.

Penn Charter is distinguished by a history of access and diversity, a balance of academics, arts and athletics, and the Quaker moral compass we provide students. Our grounding in Quaker values prompts us as global citizens to question what we can do to make the world a better place for all. It prompts us to teach our students to lead lives that make a difference. That difference could be globally significant or personally profound – a scientific discovery of great import or a quiet life characterized by a thousand acts of kindness. In the words of William Penn: "True Godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables Them to live better in it, and excites their endeavors to mend it."

Penn Charter will move forward guided by our commitment to excellence and innovation and our foundation in Quaker wisdom and practice. Our school has a long history of honoring tradition and embracing change. We will do both as we develop and implement a strategic plan for Penn Charter's future.

BETTER THAN RICHES
PHILADELPHIA

GOOD INSTRUCTION
PUBLIC SCHOOL



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Our plan for Penn Charter's future is organized around six goals, each with a set of strategies. Faculty and administrators are now developing an **implementation plan** to guide the work we must do to achieve these goals, and our vision:

Goal 1: Quakerism

Goal 2: Content

Goal 3: Teaching

Goal 4: Time

Goal 5: Space

Goal 6: Financial Sustainability

PROCESS AND PRINCIPLES

The first phase of our strategic planning work began in fall 2010 with a charge from Overseers. It concluded, after a year of discussion, analysis and reflection, in December 2011, when the board reached consensus on the strategic vision outlined in this document.

In surveys, forums and interviews with teachers, students, parents and alumni, three core principles and values rose as attributes of the Penn Charter experience. These three principles inform our vision for the future:

Excellence • Innovation • Collaboration

Goal 1:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: A FRIENDS SCHOOL

Deepen our identity and actions as a Friends school – and our students’ understanding of Quaker values – to prepare our graduates to live lives that make a difference.

STRATEGIES

The centrality of “that of God” in each person and of Meeting for Worship will continue to ground our community and relationships, just as **reflection** and the **habit of silence** will continue to nurture learning and spiritual well-being. Quaker practice can guide us to plan for a healthy **balance** for students, teachers and staff in the school schedule and curriculum.

We will integrate **service learning** into the curriculum, pre-K to 12, and, as a private school with a public mission, create a **Center for Public Purpose**, a place where our students and the wider community can advance issues of equity, social justice and peace.

AND WE WILL:

- Model and teach integrity, truth-telling, conflict resolution and ethical choices.
- Achieve a diversity of people, including an increased presence of Quakers.
- Prioritize environmental stewardship in the daily life of the school and in long-range decisions about building and remodeling projects.
- Seek opportunities for collaborations that enhance global competency through a commitment to Philadelphia and the world.

**“WALK CHEERFULLY OVER THE WORLD
ANSWERING THAT OF GOD IN EVERYONE.”**

George Fox, 1656





VM. PENN CH

Seven Survival Skills. *The Global Achievement Gap,*

by Tony Wagner

- critical thinking and problem solving
- collaboration across networks
- agility and adaptability
- initiative and entrepreneurship
- effective oral and written communication
- accessing and analyzing information
- curiosity and imagination

Goal 2:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: CONTENT

Advance our educational program to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a complex and changing world.

STRATEGIES

Will we continue to teach Shakespeare? Yes. But how we teach Shakespeare will change.

Our curriculum will continue to prepare students for admission to their top-choice colleges, but it also will evolve to position them for success after college by expanding beyond the walls of the school and connecting them with the world.

In **academics, arts and athletics**, we will identify core **content and skills** and integrate what students know and do across divisions, grades and disciplines. We will focus on **meaningful content** and **create new assessment tools** to measure whether students are learning what we intend to teach.

Multiple platforms for content delivery, including new technologies, will maximize student engagement and success.

AND WE WILL:

- Utilize current brain research about how children learn best to develop more strategies for individualized learning, within the curriculum and through learning support services.
- Develop a distinctive identity for each division that is built around an age-appropriate experience.
- Collaborate locally, nationally and internationally to enhance learning and leadership opportunities for Penn Charter students.
- Educate students for global competency through classroom experience, service, student exchanges and travel.
- Teach environmental awareness and develop advocacy for environmental sustainability.

The Five Cs + One

*Patrick Bassett, President
National Association of
Independent Schools*

- critical thinking
- communication
- collaboration
- creativity
- character
- cosmopolitanism (cross-cultural competency)





Promote excellence in teaching by supporting faculty to develop and advance their professional practice.

STRATEGIES

The student-teacher relationship is at the heart of Penn Charter. We will hold tight to this essential relationship – even as we see a new vision for a 21st century teacher.

In *Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World*, educators advocate a shift in the teacher’s role “from that of the information provider to one of a **catalyst, model, coach, innovator, researcher, and collaborator** with the learner throughout the learning process.”

In a classroom open to the world and supported with technology, the teacher’s role can expand beyond what it has been. To promote excellence in teaching, we will build a faculty of **lifelong learners** who collaborate with students in a process of continuing revelation and joyful learning.

AND WE WILL:

- Refine faculty evaluation to better align with desired student outcomes, and encourage and reward innovation and leadership.
- Support faculty professional development, including summer work (see VITAL, next page), faculty mentors and leadership coaching.
- Provide structured opportunities and ample time for the development of cross-divisional and interdisciplinary work as well as collaboration among teachers and between students and teachers.
- Strengthen faculty use of technology to further excellence in teaching and learning.

“THE CAPACITY WITHIN EACH OF US FOR CONTINUING REVELATION DICTATES THAT LEARNING MUST BE ONGOING AND ENDLESS.”

William Penn Charter School, Statement of Philosophy (1992)



Action Step:

VITAL

In Summer 2012, PC inaugurates Valuing Innovative Teaching and Learning (VITAL), a professional development program providing faculty with substantial funding during the summer months to allow for the transformation of their craft through research, collaboration and innovation. The ultimate goal of VITAL is to provide students with an outstanding, current and meaningful education. Selected from the first batch of teacher proposals, the winning proposal for Summer 2012 will focus on creating digital media content such as videos, animations and eTextbooks.



Goal 4:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: TIME

Reimagine the use of time.

STRATEGIES

The hours students spend each day on their education can be restructured to create an experience that focuses on **meaningful content** and **21st century skills**.

“Who seriously believes that locking 25 students in a small room with one adult for several hours each day is the best way for them to be ‘educated’?” Prakash Nair asks in *Don’t Just Rebuild Schools—Reinvent Them*. “In the 21st century, education is about project-based learning, connections with peers around the

world, service learning, independent research, design and creativity, and, more than anything else, critical thinking...”

A new **school-day schedule** will make time for **project-based work**, **interdisciplinary** and **cross-divisional work**. And it will allow flexibility as the classroom continues to expand through use of the Internet, outdoor campus spaces, internships and other learning opportunities and resources in metropolitan Philadelphia.



AND WE WILL:

- Rethink and refine learning outside school hours, including homework, to engage students in meaningful work.
- Plan time for reflection and mindfulness.
- View a student’s day and year holistically, supporting balance and a healthy pace.
- Support the tradition of strong student-teacher relationships.

**“ ... ARE WE WORKING ON THE RIGHT WORK?
AM I JUST MEMORIZING?”**

Upper School student, *Strategic Planning Forums*





Develop and repurpose space to serve the changing needs of the Penn Charter program and mission.

STRATEGIES

A 21st century curriculum will require a reconsideration of the Penn Charter campus.

The strategic vision calls for a **state-of-the-art Lower School**. And, beyond that?

We are blessed with a 44-acre, green campus in one of the largest cities in the country. The campus offers obvious advantages, including acres of playing fields, and hidden treasures such as the wetlands on the Strawbridge campus.

We will develop and repurpose space to fit the **needs of a dynamic new curriculum**.

AND WE WILL:

- Develop a facilities plan that supports our educational program and is fully integrated with the implementation plan for our strategic vision.
- Create an environmental plan that fosters environmental stewardship and develops systems and processes to ensure all decisions are evaluated in light of their environmental impact, with consideration of affordable and sustainable alternatives.
- Expand educational opportunities beyond this 44-acre campus to include off-site learning with academic, cultural and corporate institutions in metropolitan Philadelphia.

“A DYNAMIC LOOK AT WHAT NEEDS TO BE NEW AND ESSENTIAL IN CURRICULUM NECESSITATES A CORRESPONDING, BOLD RECONSIDERATION OF ‘THE PLACE CALLED SCHOOL.’”

Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World

Goal 6:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Provide for financial sustainability and support the mission of the school and the goals of this strategic plan.

STRATEGIES

According to the Opinion Leaders Survey of the National Association of Independent Schools, the following are the keys to financial sustainability for an independent school in the 21st century:

Financial: More efficient, less costly

Environmental: More green, less wasteful

Global: More networked internationally, less parochial

Programmatic: More skills and values, less traditional content

Demographic: Inclusive, not exclusive

We will begin work this spring on a **financial master plan** that will examine our reliance on major revenue sources such as tuition,

endowment and fund-raising; evaluate current and future budget policies and resource allocation; develop a more entrepreneurial approach to create new and alternative sources of revenue.

AND WE WILL:

- Design a capital campaign to support the financial master plan, the innovations of our strategic plan, and the school’s mission of socioeconomic diversity.
- Expand financial aid as a strategic means of fulfilling our mission and achieving our enrollment goals, with particular attention to our desire to enroll Quaker students and to meet the financial need of admitted students we desire to enroll.

“THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO THINK LONG AND HARD ABOUT THE ESCALATING COSTS OF TUITION AND WHERE THE BREAKING POINT IS.”

Strategic Planning Stakeholder Interview



Let
Your
Life
Speak.

—A QUAKER TENET

1689
William Penn
Charter
School



DARRYL J. FORD, *Head of School*

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STRATEGIC PLANNING CONFERENCE ATTENDEES, APRIL 2011

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**Overseer*

WITH GRATITUDE

This strategic planning process for the future of William Penn Charter School was launched by a gift from senior overseer William F. MacDonald Jr. OPC '62.

Citations

Publication and media citations for this document available at penncharter.com/future.



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Charter
School

3000 West School House Lane
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**"WE HAVE A CALL TO DO GOOD,
AS OFTEN AS WE HAVE THE
POWER AND THE OCCASION."**

William Penn

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: THE VIDEO
View the 8-minute movie at penncharter.com/future.

