



The Park School

2017 Strategic Plan



The Park School motto is “simplicity and sincerity” – guiding words, as well, for our 2017 Strategic Plan.

At The Park School, our commitment to excellence is clear. Our teachers are passionate masters of their craft. Park students stand out for their intelligence, character, kindness, and resilience. Our graduates are prepared to succeed – and recognized as leaders who make meaningful contributions to their next schools.

Our charge as a school is to provide the very best education to nurture the unlimited potential of the children we educate – and to keep pace with the demands of an increasingly complex world. This strategic plan articulates our aspirations for our students and the next chapter for The Park School.

With our 2017 Strategic Plan, we are simply and sincerely focused on the basics of a strong, inspiring elementary and middle school education: close and rewarding teacher-student relationships, a creative and challenging curriculum, and a diverse and inclusive school community.

We have a strong, 129-year foundation on which to build as we aspire to provide the premiere Pre-K through Middle School educational experience in the Boston metropolitan area. Park 21, our most recent strategic plan, provided the leadership and resources to make innovation a priority. We deepened our commitment to science and technology, invested in faculty coaching and collaboration, and acquired adjacent land to seed even more possibilities for future generations at Park.

With exceptional admissions trends, a strong financial position, and momentum across our community, we now have the opportunity to make a great school even greater by achieving the following priorities:

PRIORITY 1: Applied Learning

Infuse the curriculum with applied learning experiences that foster a deeper understanding of subject matter and instill in our students the skills and curiosity to thrive as global citizens in today’s world.

Research shows that young minds are engaged, challenged and developed best by integrating theory and classroom learning with real-world situations. By making connections between what they are learning and how to use that knowledge toward real-life purposes, students gain deeper understanding and develop confidence and skills to thrive in an ever-changing world.

While we expand applied learning programs at Park, we will remain committed to proven classroom learning that develops skills and knowledge within academic disciplines. Students must continue to master the fundamentals – including developing strong oral and written communication skills, and demonstrating fluency with core subjects such as math, science, social studies, languages and the arts– while honing highly-evolved abilities to think critically, design, innovate, and collaborate.

With this strategic plan, we will:

- Provide more opportunities for students to create their own knowledge through applied learning programs that foster academic growth, creativity, flexible thinking, and collaboration within and outside of Park.
- Sequence these experiences in a seamless trajectory from an intentional play-based curriculum in the early grades, to meaningful opportunities for project-based learning in the later grades – ensuring appropriate staffing at all levels to achieve the greatest impact.
- Modernize and enhance the functionality and flexibility of early childhood and middle school classrooms, improve and integrate indoor and outdoor learning spaces, and create multi-use areas for applied learning.
- Invest in best practices by providing professional development for faculty to design, implement and evaluate applied learning programs.
- Redesign the school schedule to support these evolving classroom practices and facilitate increased opportunities for in-depth, project-based and multidisciplinary work.

PRIORITY 2: Social & Emotional Development

Strengthen our commitment to explicit and cohesive programs that build social-emotional skills of students, caring for their overall wellbeing and helping them thrive in school and life.

Social-emotional learning is the process through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, take risks and experience success and failure, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

By focusing on the whole child, Park’s cultivation of our students’ social-emotional learning enhances academic performance, promotes student confidence, and fosters diversity and inclusion by creating a welcoming, participatory and caring climate for learning.

STRATEGIC PLAN

With this strategic plan, we will:

- Develop a coordinated framework for social-emotional learning at Park that will help guide curriculum choices and classroom instruction, inform schoolwide practices and policies, and help students gain targeted competencies.
- Expand counseling services and resources for academic support.
- Create new gathering spaces for recreational, dining, and socialization purposes where students can foster deeper relationships and explore their burgeoning independence.
- Invest in best practices by providing professional development for faculty to develop new curricula and practices in social-emotional learning.

PRIORITY 3: Beyond the Classroom

Enrich our auxiliary programs to enhance The Park School experience beyond the classroom, putting our school in a class by itself with our out-of-class learning opportunities.

At Park, learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. The energy and activity at Park before and after school demonstrates the connectedness of our students and families to their school community.

Today, many of our students take part in co-curricular opportunities including special interest clubs, athletics, and academic enrichment. We are committed to nurturing their passions and interests beyond the traditional school day, while also serving the needs of our families.

With this strategic plan, we will:

- Reimagine co-curricular programming with a broad range of high-quality offerings that excite students, boost learning, and extend Park's commitment to excellence throughout the day. A Director of Auxiliary Programs will implement a new vision for the co-curricular experience at Park.
- Ensure that co-curricular programs are integrated into the fabric of school life, align with the trajectory of the school day, and engage students at all levels of interest, ability and potential.
- Maintain the accessibility and affordability, and increase the connectedness of, co-curricular programs to affirm the spirit of community we cherish at Park.

PRIORITY 4: Financial Support

Build upon Park’s strong financial position to further our mission and implement this strategic plan.

Throughout our history, Park has held itself to the highest standards of performance at all levels of the school. We recognize the importance of aligning resources to meet the true cost of a Park education –making strategic choices that enhance our financial strength and flexibility.

To ensure an economic model that works for our school and our families, future tuition increases alone cannot be expected to shoulder the financial burden of increasing operating costs or implementing this strategic plan. We must build the resources required to support new initiatives, while continuing to invest in the bedrock priorities that define a Park School education.

With this strategic plan, we will:

- Grow endowment funds to support new priorities in applied learning, social-emotional learning, and co-curricular programming.
- Build the endowment to reduce the rate of future tuition increases, helping ensure that families from diverse means can continue to access a Park School education.
- Further invest in faculty and staff compensation, coaching, and professional development to attract, develop, and retain the caliber of professionals that defines Park.

In keeping with our motto of simplicity and sincerity, this strategic plan intends to make a great school, even greater.

Empowered by our resolve to achieve the best on behalf of our students, our purpose is to implement this strategic plan intentionally and with confidence – and in the spirit of the commitment to excellence in all forms that defines The Park School.

We encourage our students to reach their greatest potential, and so will The Park School. Embarking on this new strategic plan, Park will sustain its Mission into the future and provide expanded opportunities for our students and faculty to excel, while strengthening and enriching our entire community.