

Engage. Inspire. Enrich.

Ever Forward:

Stevens Cooperative School's Strategic Vision



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Dear Members of the Stevens Cooperative School Community,

Strong schools are ones that have a timeless, clear, and enthusiastic set of strategies for the future. And at Stevens, we are in a constant state of reflection and planning, always seeking to answer the question, "What's next?"

The Board of Trustees have engaged in countless discussions about the evolving landscape of independent schools and the need to have a timeless set of values and priorities that focus on our school's efforts and guide our journey forward. From these conversations centered around the sustainability and bright future of Stevens, this Strategic Vision, entitled "Ever Forward" was drafted by the school's leadership and adopted by the Board.

In looking long term at the Stevens experience and answering the question "What's next," our Strategic Vision, framed around the school's four pillars, or core values, will serve to anchor us and steer thoughtful and strategic decision making processes.

Ever Forward: Stevens' Strategic Vision was designed to **engage** our constituents, **inspire** our community, and **enrich** the decisions made by the school. The school's mission and core values of **Diversity & Equity, Community, Progressive Teaching & Learning, and Continuous Improvement** are described within the framework of the school's strategic vision and remain at the center of our work with the students and within our greater community.

The Board and leadership of the school are confident in Stevens' strong infrastructure, stability and reputation. We hope that this document clearly outlines the school's vision for the future, engages you as a Stevens community member, and inspires your journey forward with the school.



Sergio Alati, Ed.D
Head of School



Kim Lew
Chair, Board of Trustees, 2013-Current

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Introduction

In 1949, professors at Stevens Institute of Technology began a playgroup for their own young children, forming Stevens Cooperative School with just a few students. Today, and many generations later, Stevens has grown to more than 430 students, ages 2 through 14, and expanded its reach to campuses located in Hoboken and Jersey City, New Jersey. In this Strategic Vision, we look to the future -- to continue as a thriving school dedicated to excellence.

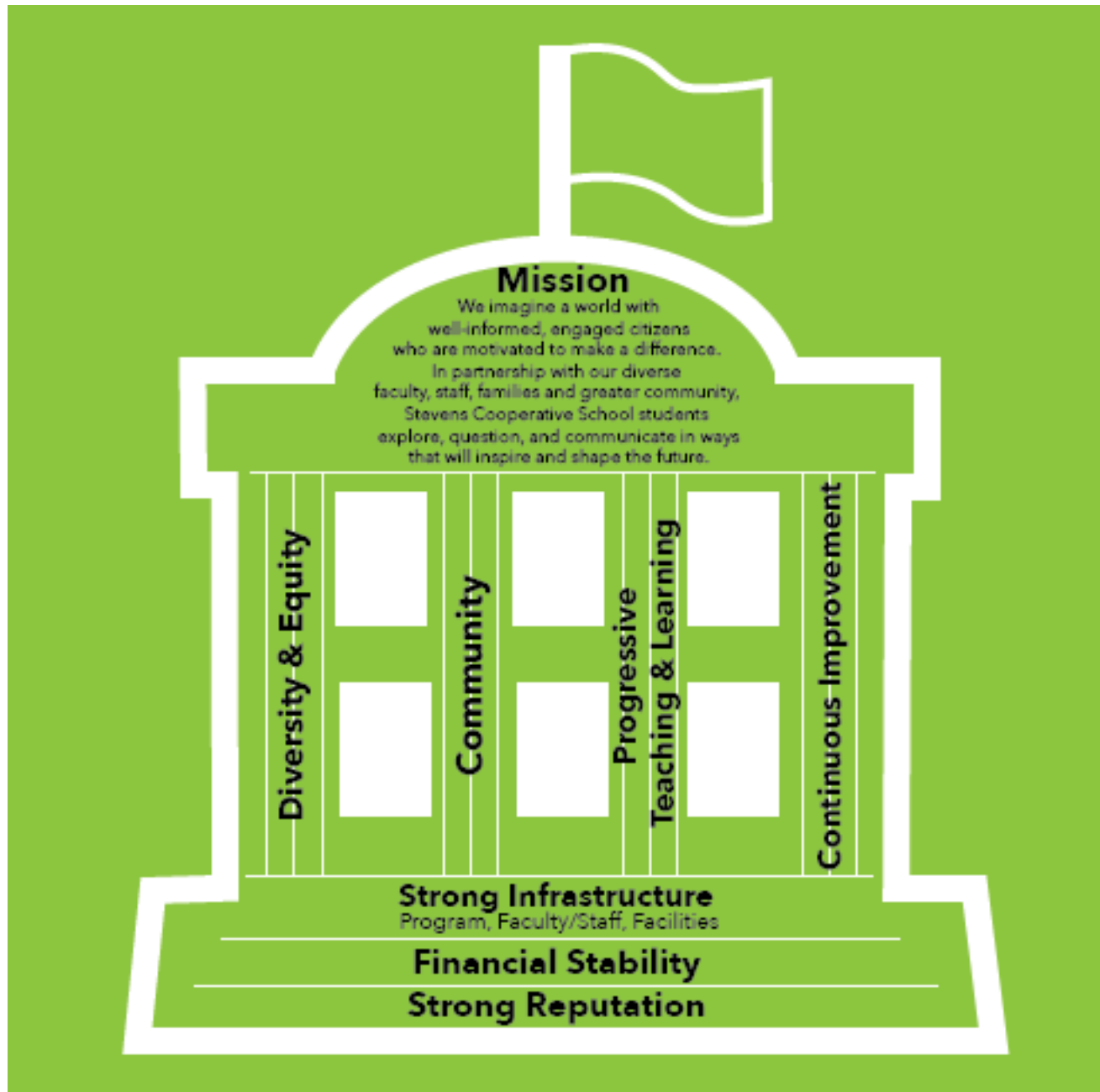
Research tells us that strategic plans quickly become obsolete as internal and external factors change. We subscribe to the theory that true strategic vision involves developing "strategic pillars" or core values that anchor us to our foundation, guide decision making, and help us to achieve the school's mission and vision as we respond to the inevitable change that the market will bring. These pillars are timeless and help achieve positive change by informing short, medium, and long term planning. They keep the whole community focused on what is truly important to the school, while being flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.



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Our School's Strategic Vision is guided by our **mission statement** as the umbrella for all we do.

We imagine a world with well-informed, engaged citizens who are motivated to make a difference. In partnership with our diverse faculty, staff, families, and the greater community, Stevens Cooperative School students explore, question, and communicate in ways that will inspire and shape the future.

We imagine: For our students to be successful, fulfilled adults, they need to be able to imagine what is possible. That requires a "just right" learning environment that fosters inquiry, curiosity, and resourcefulness.

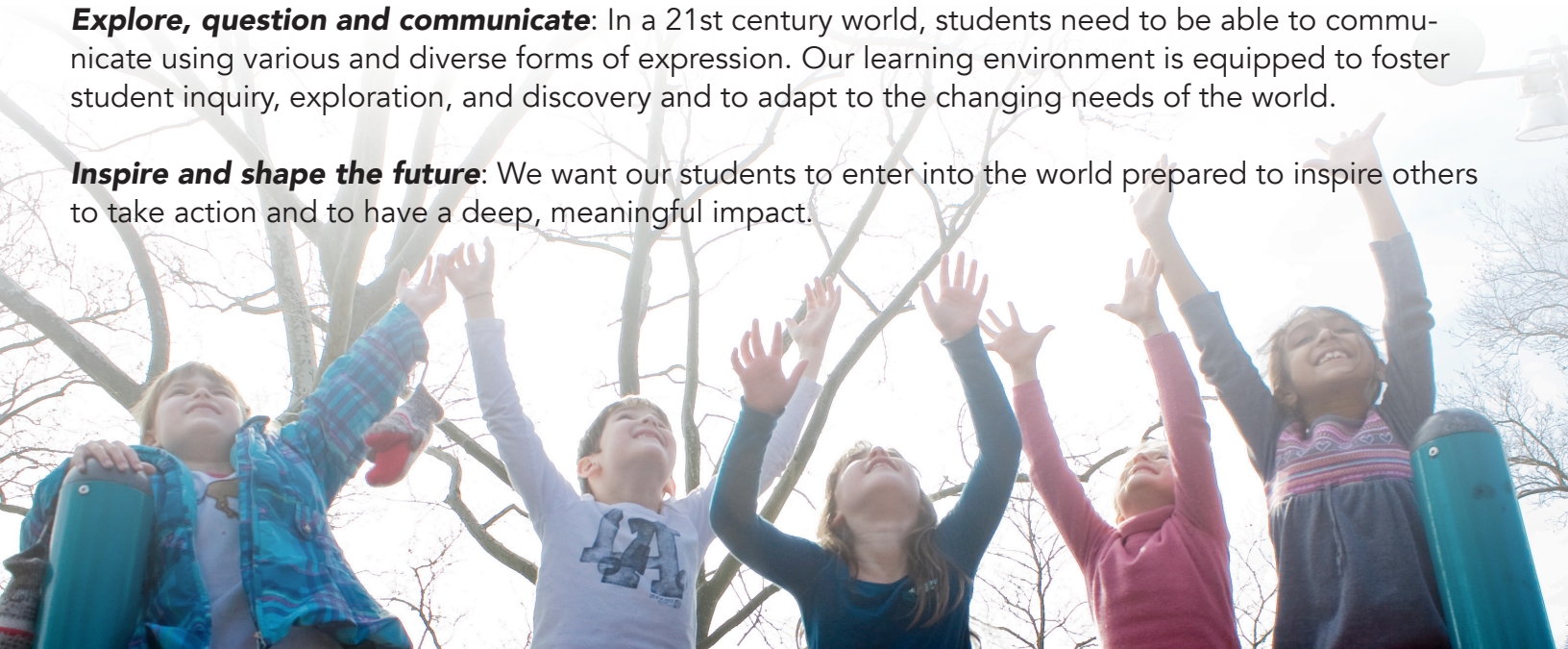
Well-informed, engaged citizens: Our students are knowledgeable, thoughtful, and participatory members of their extended communities because they learn in a supportive school environment that is set up to meet these goals.

Motivated to make a difference: A school can offer an array of students experiences, but motivated students are a reflection of a student-centered, inclusive, and supportive school environment that understands how to ignite students' interests and passions.

In partnership: Educating students does not happen in a silo. It takes a collective team approach from all constituencies for students to have access to the most enriching educational experience.

Explore, question and communicate: In a 21st century world, students need to be able to communicate using various and diverse forms of expression. Our learning environment is equipped to foster student inquiry, exploration, and discovery and to adapt to the changing needs of the world.

Inspire and shape the future: We want our students to enter into the world prepared to inspire others to take action and to have a deep, meaningful impact.



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Our pillars of **Diversity and Equity, Community, Progressive Teaching and Learning, and Innovation/Continuous Improvement** inform the type of learning community we aspire to be. Our pillars hold us up and provide clarity of purpose.

Pillar 1: Diversity and Equity

Stevens Diversity Statement: We believe an equitable and inclusive learning environment creates empowering and supportive experiences that build a more just and compassionate world. Stevens Cooperative School is a safe place for students to develop their authentic identities and grow an appreciation for how diversity enriches our lives. We strive to be a school comprised of unique individuals of different backgrounds, identities, and beliefs, where all voices are equally valued and respected. We actively attempt to fight intolerance, discrimination, and inequity. Our school is a place where all members feel empowered, embraced, and celebrated for who they are. We provide students, faculty, staff, and families with the resources, tools, and opportunities needed to engage ethically with the larger community and shape the future. We are committed to exploring and understanding personal and systemic biases, so that students can become the best form of themselves and advocate for others. Students take action and study issues of social justice in ways that facilitate and deepen their understanding of power, personal responsibility, and social change. At Stevens Cooperative School, our diversity is our unity and a cornerstone of our growth as human beings and global citizens.

This statement, adopted by the board of trustees in 2017, clarifies and crystalizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the fabric of our school's core purpose and intentions. Each year our school continuously focuses on committing time, resources, and spaces to enable us to grow, expand, and embody our commitment. Our hiring practices, programmatic discussions, professional development, and overall systems and structures are organized with this intent in mind.



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Pillar 2: Community

A treasured value at Stevens is the feeling of family and inclusivity at a school where the teachers and staff know every student by name. Students have cross-age relationships and there is an open door for parents to be involved in the life of the school through our Cooperative structure and commitment to a family-school partnership. We nurture a diverse community by ensuring that we welcome all voices and lay clear pathways for engagement. Building a culture of philanthropy is essential to maintaining our school's commitment to students and ensuring sustainability. We find ways to foster within the community a deep understanding of Stevens' mission and the way in which it informs our educational program, diversity efforts, and community.



Pillar 3: Progressive Teaching and Learning



What is best for the student is at the core of all we do. Stevens has a rich tradition of celebrating and educating the whole child so that our graduates are prepared socially, emotionally, and cognitively to be active participants and leaders. Students are prepared through our commitment to experiential, engaging, and participatory instruction and programs that fosters creativity, collaboration, and empowerment. Our students come together in a rigorous and supportive laboratory of learning where they develop as intellectual beings, ethical citizens, growth minded individuals, and as effective communicators. It is critical that students have opportunities to apply their learning to the external world and for the outside world to be a part of an authentic learning experience. Reflection is a cornerstone of student learning and allows each student to reach goals and meet

their ultimate potential. We continually aspire to ensuring the highest quality progressive education for every student through a system of review and continual improvement.

Pillar 4: Innovation/Continuous Improvement

Stevens is a school that never rests on its laurels and is consistently reflecting on all aspects of its deliverables, so that we can strive to be outstanding. Creativity results when a school has the ability to innovate and enhance its curriculum and programs, facilities, and staffing with the necessary resources so that it can remain current, cutting edge, and true to its mission. Our students develop passions and interests because they have been exposed to a variety of diverse experiences and people. The history of creativity at Stevens is rich and is highlighted by our ability to foster conditions where our students continually thrive, where we can respond to the needs of our changing world, and where we make sure that every school moment counts. True innovation also comes from our focus on recruiting and retaining creative faculty and staff who understand the value and significance of a progressive education.



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The foundational steps of strong infrastructure, financial stability, and strong reputation help us achieve our strategic vision and enable us to continue to thrive as a successful school of excellence. These steps build on each other, as financial stability allows us to improve the program and have a diverse population. Improvement in reputation gives us access to raising money and in turn improving our financial stability. Together our foundational steps allow us to achieve our four pillars with confidence and purpose.

Foundational Step 1: Strong infrastructure (program, faculty/staff, facilities)

An emphasis is placed on continuous innovation and growth of our various academic and extracurricular programs. Stevens continues to invest in its faculty and staff, with the intention of attracting and retaining mission-centered individuals who represent a balance of background, age, and experience. Our dedicated faculty and staff help define the school and we nurture teachers whose energy, creativity, and passions deepen the school's stability, efficiency, and dedication to our mission. We currently operate our school programs from three buildings in Hoboken and one building in Newport. Continued focus is placed on making sure our facilities are all mission appropriate and allow us to continuously meet the demands of our educational vision.

Foundational Step 2: Financial stability

Stevens creates the financial resources needed for long-term sustainability. Our school has been financially stable for a number of years but has operated primarily from tuition income. The school seeks to identify ways to grow our philanthropy program, improve the stewardship of our many supporters, and build a major gifts program that can lead to the creation of an endowment, capital campaign, or other major projects as the board of trustees and head of school see fit. The school's goal is to address the competing needs of having affordable tuition, competitive salaries, and maintaining a level of financial aid that will support our diverse community and give all qualified students access to a Stevens education.

Foundational Step 3: Strong reputation

Stevens continuously evaluates the satisfaction of our families, students, and faculty/staff through informal and formal modes of feedback. A successful school is predicated upon its word of mouth reputation. A strong reputation helps the school distinguish itself from competitors, and can even be the deciding factor in whether someone chooses to join our school. Stevens is committed to clearing up misunderstandings, practicing positive behavior, being trustworthy and dependable, and showing genuine interest in others.