

# Gill St. Bernard's School STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

## MISSION

*To provide a balanced, diverse, and secure community that prepares students academically, socially, and ethically for college and a meaningful life.*

## Section I: Innovative Learning Environment



**GOAL: Attract, develop, and retain dynamic and high-performing faculty and staff who embrace GSB's mission and core values, and who bring diverse and inclusive experiences, perspectives, and insights to their roles.**

- Ensure all academic courses are taught by highly-qualified professionals who focus on student mastery of skills and understanding of subjects at every level.
- Continue to attract and retain talented faculty and staff.
- Require 100 percent annual participation in professional development programs that are dynamic, relevant, technologically-enhanced, and that focus on opportunities allowing for collaboration across all divisions and departments.
- Develop new annual evaluations based upon measurable goals aligned with key components of the strategic plan.

**GOAL: Provide an innovative and relevant academic curriculum that is appropriately aligned across all divisions and emphasizes adaptability, collaborative inquiry, global awareness, and mastery of skills, ensuring that students are prepared for college and a meaningful life.**

- Continue to align the academic curriculum of critical subjects across all divisions.
- Develop personal portfolios for each student detailing individual progress in the following areas:
  - self-regulation and self-awareness (collaboration, integrity, resilience, and teamwork);
  - academic and professional competence (creativity, critical-thinking, flexibility, problem-solving, and technological expertise); and
  - civic and societal accountability (service to others).
- Utilize innovative approaches and activities to teach collaborative inquiry.
- Overhaul the Technology Master Plan to support the teaching methodology in all academic subject areas and provide comprehensive training for faculty and staff.
- Create and implement an integrated school-wide strategy to use technology as a tool to address individual learning styles and developmental differences.
- Utilize diverse approaches to assess student progress and mastery of skills.

**GOAL: Enhance the broad range of co-curricular opportunities providing a complementary balance to the academic program that allows for individual exploration, personal growth, and the pursuit of excellence.**

- Ensure the school offers co-curricular activities appropriate for every division and, when appropriate, align the offerings across divisions to ensure continuity.
- Offer a wide range of programs in the arts, athletics, clubs, service learning, student leadership, and other activities to meet the needs of a diverse student body. Consider requiring student participation in these areas as an essential component of delivering our mission.
- Enhance character-education programs, building on an aligned curriculum across divisions. Include digital citizenship and safety in the curriculum.
- Ensure all co-curricular programs are accessible and affordable to the entire student body.

**GOAL: Expand and strengthen GSB's commitment to global and experiential education so that its academic programs cultivate the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for students to be engaged and culturally aware.**

- Review and enhance all Lower School and Middle School programs that feature travel and/or hands-on learning opportunities.
- Restructure the Upper School Spring Unit Program to ensure academically-centered experiences in three primary areas: cultural immersion, experiential learning, and service learning.
- Expand Upper School student internship opportunities to reflect diverse student interests and to build on the resources of the broader community.
- Continue to provide age-appropriate opportunities for students to travel locally, nationally, and globally. Establish an annual review of all safety, security, and risk components associated with travel programs.
- Explore service learning as a required element of our Upper School experience.
- Expand opportunities for students to immerse themselves in cultures and experiences that inform and enhance their academic studies.
- Support the development of course offerings that connect to cross-cultural perspectives, innovative pedagogy, and research.

## Section II: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Community

### **GOAL: Reinforce GSB's commitment to community, diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

- Expand the curriculum with a global and multicultural focus within and across divisions.
- Expand access to GSB with the goal of achieving the broadest possible diversity.
- Provide resources to ensure all GSB students and families can fully participate in the life of the school.
- Ensure that all GSB students have an equitable opportunity to thrive both academically and socially.
- Articulate and communicate our curriculum and philosophy in this area to the broader community.



### **GOAL: Utilize Home Winds for academic and service-learning programs that bring diverse and inclusive experiences to GSB and the surrounding community.**

- Establish the Home Winds Center of Sustainability to create a better understanding of the role of Home Winds at the school and within the community.
- Expand co-curricular programs at Home Winds that include an academic component.
- Cultivate partnerships with local farmers for a community-service based initiative in conjunction with Home Winds that focuses on meeting the needs of local underserved families.
- Explore the feasibility of creating a community garden on campus.

### **GOAL: Further enhance GSB's reputation in the Chester and Peapack-Gladstone communities.**

- Continue to cultivate relationships with town administrators and staff and to attend town meetings when appropriate.
- Leverage our media platforms (websites, social, traditional media) to demonstrate GSB's value proposition for its programs in academics, arts, athletics, and community service as well as its positive impact on the local and global community.

### **GOAL: Foster the relationship with our alumni to further demonstrate GSB's value in preparing students academically, socially, and ethically for college and a meaningful life.**

- Proactively engage alumni as ambassadors, class agents, and trustees.
- Utilize social media and other communications tools to ensure alumni are both informed of school activities and provided opportunities to engage.
- Leverage the networks of alumni for key engagement opportunities, including fundraising, the Spring Unit program and the Upper School internship program. When appropriate, encourage alumni to use their experience and expertise to enhance these programs.



## Section III: Financial Stewardship



### **GOAL: Increase the endowment and continue to enhance the school's fundraising strategy.**

- Increase endowment funds to support global and experiential education, need-based financial aid, professional development, and specific operations.
- Expand the current base of donors with a segmentation strategy (alumni, companies, foundations, and past parents).
- Better educate the community about the nature and purpose of the GSB Fund and its connection to programs, professional development, and special projects.
- Expand our donation options by leveraging technology relevant to all audiences.
- Grow the school's planned giving program, with gifts to the endowment a priority.

### **GOAL: Refine the five-year financial plan to equalize operating expenses to tuition and endowment earnings.**

- Develop and ensure an optimal budget model that effectively uses operating expenses, tuition, and endowment earnings to meet the needs of the GSB community.
- Audit all divisions/departments on an expense/revenue basis annually to determine financial viability.
- Assess and adjust staffing levels and assignments based on the needs of the school, enrollment, and the performance of individuals/departments/divisions.
- Evaluate tuition annually to maintain a level comparable to peer schools and ensure alignment with the costs of providing strong academic and co-curricular programs, an outstanding faculty and staff, and a vibrant campus.
- Annually review all rentals of school properties with an emphasis on compliance with all local regulations and return-on-investments to ensure maximum impact against budget targets.

### **GOAL: Explore opportunities to restructure and ultimately retire GSB's long-term debt.**

- Partner with a forward-looking financial institution to restructure any long-term debt.
- Eliminate any debt through fundraising and a careful stewardship of the school's resources.

### **GOAL: Adopt a risk management approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential areas of risk at the school.**

- Identify key stakeholders among the faculty and staff to be a part of this initiative.
- Ensure an engaged faculty and staff approach, rather than an administratively-directed process.
- Utilize the risk management approach to help prioritize needs in the budget.
- Establish an ongoing team to oversee the process.

## Section IV: Sustainable Growth and Development



**GOAL: Utilize the Campus Master Site Plan as a framework for incorporating sustainable environmental practices into all aspects of the school operations.**

- Establish, publish, and maintain Sustainable Design Guidelines relevant to GSB and ensure compliance.
- Maximize the use of energy-efficient materials and technologies in new construction and resource conservation.
- Audit waste (e-waste, papers, and plastics) within daily operations and events and deepen community involvement in recycling, reducing, and repurposing waste on campus.
- Continue to use alternate forms of energy, including solar, wind, and other options.
- Enhance GSB's "garden-to-table" approach to sourcing foods from its gardens to its cafeteria operations.
- Annually review the Campus Master Site Plan.

**GOAL: Annually revise the Comprehensive School Safety Guidelines that provide for the safety, security, and well-being of the GSB community.**

- Certify all faculty and staff in First Aid, CPR, and the use of EpiPens and the automated external defibrillators (AED).
- Annually update the Communications Plan in keeping with current technology to notify the community of emergencies.
- Explore the viability of a mental health and wellness plan for the school community.
- Expand the use of cameras, automated door locks, and other technologies to further assist the efforts to keep the community safe.