



THE  
ALTAMONT  
SCHOOL

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TRUTH • KNOWLEDGE • HONOR  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

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# A LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT



We are excited to share with you the strategic priorities that will guide The Altamont School over the next several years. Many thanks to the hundreds of members of the Altamont community who responded to our invitation to take part in the strategic planning process, including parents, students, alumni, faculty, administrators, trustees, community leaders, and other friends of the school. The interviews, focus groups, and survey in which you participated provided school leadership with valuable insights and data, and we believe that the strategic priorities identified reflect the broad range of your contributions.

More than just a plan, these priorities reflect the values that have made Altamont a premier independent school with a strong community of lifelong learners. Our process and its outcomes also highlight our commitment to being an inclusive institution that is both of and for the greater Birmingham community. We know that while we have taken many strides in this regard, there is yet more progress to be made.

## The plan's five priorities are:

- 1 Faculty Excellence
- 2 Student Development
- 3 Curriculum, Instruction and Learning
- 4 Community
- 5 Sustainability

The opportunities and challenges facing modern independent schools require quick thinking and adaptability—a strategic plan that sits in a binder and gathers dust does little good. We will review and update our priorities regularly, adding to them when it is prudent, and revising or removing them as we accomplish objectives or determine that they are no longer relevant. We will also communicate with the Altamont community to update you on our progress and to solicit feedback.

Thank you again for all that you have done to help make this process a success, and we look forward to engaging with you as we continue to move the school forward together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Nicholson".

Chris Nicholson '99  
President, Board of Trustees

## THE MISSION OF THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

is to improve the fabric of society by graduating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas. To this end, the school attracts, nurtures, and challenges students whose commitment to truth, knowledge, and honor will prepare them not only for the most rigorous college programs, but also for productive lives.



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## WHO WE ARE

**Altamont offers a challenging college preparatory curriculum where every class is taught at the honors level or above.** Three-fourths of seniors maintain an A/B average in Altamont's accelerated courses. Our students leave us ready for challenging college coursework. As well as joining other students in a variety of curricular and extracurricular activities, more than half of our students also compete on one or more of our athletic teams.

Our faculty includes more than 50 full- or part-time teachers regionally and nationally recognized as outstanding educators. They all teach in their certified fields of study, sponsor clubs, coach sports, and serve as academic advisors.

Altamont students can participate in all aspects of student life: challenging academics, student government, athletics, fine and performing arts, leadership service, and more. Opportunity, encouragement and support allow students to discover their interests and talents in a manner that not only equips them with sound academic skills, but also promotes personal growth, emotional health and physical well-being throughout high school, college and beyond.

**361**  
students in  
grades 5-12



**12:1**  
student-to-faculty ratio

**28%**  
diversity

**87** NEW STUDENTS FROM **26** ZIP CODES AND **40** SCHOOLS

**30+** published  
authors



**14** perfect ACT scores (2015-21)

**19** CLUBS &  
ACADEMIC  
TEAMS

**9** VARSITY  
SPORTS

**28** SCHOLASTIC  
ART & WRITING  
AWARDS



**45** STUDENT-LED MIREE SERVICE  
PROJECTS IN BIRMINGHAM



# CORE VALUES

The Altamont environment is one of respect and encouragement. We value and have compassion for every individual in our diverse school community. Through our curriculum, honor code, and school activities, we emphasize the importance of respecting and understanding cultural, religious, intellectual and social differences that constitute our global and local societies. To that end, our community lives five Core Values—Respect, Integrity, Balance, Curiosity, and Leadership—which guide us along the path of Truth, Honor, and Knowledge and enable us to fulfill our mission.



**RESPECT:** We value and have compassion for every individual in our diverse school community. Through our curriculum and school activities, we emphasize the importance of respecting and understanding cultural, religious, intellectual, and social differences that constitute our global and local societies.



**BALANCE:** We motivate students to align their passions with their strengths. We encourage and support our students as they discover the arts, pursue athletics, and delve into academics in a manner that not only equips them with the skills to navigate life's varied circumstances, but also promotes personal growth, emotional health, and physical well-being.



**INTEGRITY:** Because we embrace integrity as the heart of Altamont's mission, we challenge students to demonstrate honorable words and deeds, to make courageous choices, and to exhibit personal responsibility at all times.



**CURIOSITY:** We nurture intellectual curiosity by celebrating learning, discovery, and innovation. We encourage our students to ask questions, seek truth, and put ideas into action.



**LEADERSHIP:** We foster every student's unique capacity to lead and improve society through active discourse, student driven initiatives, and service to others.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Recruit, retain, and support highly knowledgeable, innovative faculty who foster intellectual curiosity and encourage students to stretch and grow.

*To improve Faculty Excellence, we will:*

Refine, improve, and publish the **annual faculty growth process** and ensure it is clear, consistent, straightforward, and growth minded.

Design and implement a **professional development program** and resources that include and build from Altamont's Professional Learning Communities and support faculty in continual development.

Review **faculty compensation and benefits** to ensure Altamont is an attractive and competitive place of employment.

Recruit a **more diverse faculty** to foster an environment in which students see themselves reflected in faculty.

Market and **publicize strengths of faculty** and teaching methods as a strategy for recruitment.

Develop a process for communication, dialogue, and **engagement between the Board and faculty.**



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Ensure all students have equitable access to opportunities, resources, and support for individualized whole student development (physical, mental, social, emotional, and cognitive).

*To encourage Student Development, we will:*

Offer a wide range of **extracurricular opportunities** that are equally resourced and supported, including for lower-school students.

Strengthen Altamont's **Multi-Tiered System of Support** for students to ensure academic success and social-emotional well-being.

Review the purpose and functioning of **Honor Court**.

Review and elevate **Fall Project Week**, maintaining the breadth of opportunities and encouraging the development of new ones, while ensuring access to all.

Elevate and align the **Miree Center** with similar initiatives and explore including community partnerships into the center's focus.

Increase **two-way communication** and opportunities for students to provide input on decisions.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & LEARNING

Offer an unparalleled educational experience to all students through an array of unique, tailored, and rigorous educational opportunities that allow each student to pursue their passions, grow through challenges, and develop their full potential.

*To improve Curriculum, Instruction and Learning, we will:*

Conduct an **in-depth review of existing curriculum** to ensure it is aligned, coordinated, and clearly articulated across 8 years and demonstrates progression of skills and content.

Increase **communication and understanding of curriculum alignment** with all families, regardless of what grade level students begin at Altamont, to demonstrate the value of an Altamont education.

Articulate pathways to **individualized curriculum development** and opportunities for more rigorous educational experiences that are inclusive of diverse learning styles.

Utilize experiential, innovative and **student-centric teaching methods** that regularly incorporate technology.

Increase **cross-disciplinary and project-based learning**.

Offer more opportunities to communicate with parents about **individual student progress**.





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMMUNITY

Cultivate an Altamont community that is cohesive, caring, diverse, and respectful, and one that welcomes and engages with the broader Birmingham community in meaningful ways.

*To encourage a Community Spirit, we will:*

Strengthen **internal communication** at Altamont, including with students, parents, faculty and staff.

Strengthen **parent engagement** and provide opportunities for all parents to be included and participate in the Altamont community.

Strengthen **alumni activities and engagement** with the Altamont community.

Strengthen **external communication and marketing** at Altamont so community stakeholders have a positive, accurate picture of who Altamont is and feel welcome at Altamont.

Identify, develop, and strengthen **community partnerships** to support student development, service, learning, and leadership.

Explore developing **Comer property** into a community gathering space, space for project-based learning, and/or space for innovative extracurricular activities.

Continue the **work of IDEA** and share it regularly with Altamont stakeholders and partners.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

Significantly grow the financial resources of Altamont to ensure the Altamont experience remains exceptional and accessible for the future.

*To increase Sustainability, we will:*

Significantly **grow the endowment** to support Altamont's long-term success.

Design and implement a **fund development strategy** for Altamont.

Ensure adequate capacity for and strong communication across **the enrollment, advancement, and alumni relations offices.**

Develop a plan and budget for upkeep and **maintenance of facilities.**





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[www.altamontschool.org](http://www.altamontschool.org)